

# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Revolutionary Communist Group

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## THATCHER'S

# legacy



# recession racism

# WAR



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Europe, or more specifically triumphant German capitalism, is ringing the final bell on the Thatcher years. The point has been sharply driven home. Political success and survival ultimately depend on economics. The deep, apparently insoluble crisis of British capitalism lay behind Thatcher coming to power and her failure to resolve that crisis, in the end, will see her off. If not now, then at the next election.

The onset of recession in Britain finally forced Mrs Thatcher's most loyal servant, Sir Geoffrey Howe, to take the plunge. If Britain's economic decline were to be contained she had to face the unpalatable truth. Britain's national sovereignty must be sacrificed to a higher one. In the words of the new pretender to the throne:

'Our imperial days are over. Inside Europe we are part of what will be a world power. That national sovereignty which we lose is more than made good by a share of the much larger sovereignty which we get from participation in Europe.' (Heseltine 1986)

Howe's method of leaving the cabinet was designed to subvert Thatcher's authority. British business and the City of London had had enough. Britain's integration into Europe was now long overdue. Further delay would seriously threaten Britain's long term economic interests. Howe expressed this anxiety in his resignation speech when he attacked Thatcher's little Englander defence of British sovereignty:

'What kind of vision is that for our business people, who trade there each day, for our financiers who seek to make London the money capital of Europe... the 11 others cannot impose their solution on the 12th country against his will. But they can go ahead without us. The risk is not imposition, but isolation.'

The divisions of the Tory party over Europe express a much deeper malaise. As FRFI argued a year ago at the time of Lawson's resignation from the Cabinet, what is at issue is the future direction of British capitalism and British politics. As the post-war boom came to an end sections of the British ruling class began to recognise that British economic policy had to take a new direction if Britain's relative economic decline were to be reversed.

'They saw British economic interests as being better served by joining a regional, potentially very powerful imperialist bloc in Europe rather than remaining an overstretched imperialist power in the tow of US imperialism. This, however, would only make sense if the EEC developed into a federal or unitary state capable of upholding European economic interests in the face of the challenge from the other powerful imperial-

ist powers, the US and a rapidly growing Japan.' (David Reed, 'Thatcher baulks at European hurdle' FRFI 91 November/December 1989)

Thatcher has always refused to accept a secondary role for Britain in world affairs, relishing the glory of being a junior partner of US imperialism. That Britain's imperialist pretensions would have to be subordinate to a wider European federation dominated by German capitalism is repugnant to her. She had her way until her own 'economic miracle' proved to be delusion. Britain's relative economic decline has not been halted and the pressure from British capital to integrate with Europe has become unstoppable.

#### ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION (EMU)

The globalisation of financial markets inevitably means a loss of power for national governments. The size of the City of London, financial liberalisation and free movement of currency are all in accord with Thatcher's free market stance. Yet all contribute to the loss of sovereignty she bemoans.



While the world sells some \$600bn of goods a year it buys and sells \$600bn of foreign exchange a day. A single currency is helpless against such forces. It has been the financial markets which have decided the major movements of the pound not the British Parliament or indeed the British Cabinet. By joining the ERM and agreeing to keep the exchange rates of currencies within agreed bands of each other, member states have access to over \$200bn to take on the markets with some effect. This inevitably means handing

over crucial decisions to European institutions. The end product will be a European-wide central bank and a single currency.

The British proposal for a parallel currency, the 'hard ECU', is almost certainly a delaying tactic designed by British civil servants to appease Thatcher and avoid the inevitable. As one financial writer has pointed out, 'the dominant monetary arrangements of the modern age - in which one country has one law, one central bank and one currency - have not ev-

olved accidentally... A "parallel currency" in which two currencies and central banks are supposed to coexist is a contradiction in terms.' (Tim Congdon, *Financial Times* 14 November 1990)

British trade with the EC is expanding rapidly. More than half of Britain's foreign trade is within the EC compared to one third 20 years ago. The City would gain enormously through EMU, becoming the financial centre of the largest economic power in the world. The ruling class knows that the longer Britain stays out of this process the less impact it will have on the new European institutions as they arise. Heseltine puts the point bluntly: 'The only discretion Britain possesses is to remain outside while the French and the Germans stitch up Europe's financial arrangements to their advantage and our disadvantage.'

#### A PATH STREWN WITH CASUALTIES

Cabinet ministers have fallen, the Tory Party HAS faced ever growing crises as Thatcher has resisted this inevitable path into Europe. We now know that it was only the threat of resignation of her then-Chancellor

Lawson and Foreign Secretary Howe which forced her to accept the Madrid conditions, the timetable to take sterling into the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM). A few months later Lawson resigned when Thatcher continued to block the path to joining the ERM and used her advisor Walters to rubbish such a decision. After joining the ERM and cutting interest rates by one per cent on 8 October with much ballyhoo, she still refused to contemplate seriously the consequences of this move - a European central bank to be followed eventually by a European single currency.

A European summit at the end of October, with Britain opposed, fixed 1 January 1994 as the date for starting the second phase of economic and monetary union, involving the creation of a European central bank to be followed within three years by a decision to launch a single European currency. Thatcher felt she had been outmanoeuvred and was furious. In Parliament on 30 October she ignored her brief and went on the offensive: 'If you hand over your sterling, you hand over the powers of this Parliament to Europe'. The government had no intention of abolishing the pound sterling and she accused the Commission of being out to 'extinguish democracy'. She rubbished Chancellor Major's plan for a parallel currency, the 'hard ECU', 'it would not be widely used'. She gave every indication that she would be prepared to fight the next election on a little Englander platform wrapped in a Union Jack defending Britain's sovereignty.

She might have got away with this appeal to the petty bourgeois jingoistic current in the Tory Party in the middle of an economic boom but the British economy was now entering a severe recession. Even Mur-

## Only one of us



'Geoffrey, what is wrong with your new bat?'

CAROL BRICKLEY

There is now officially only 'One of Us'. Mrs Thatcher is the sole survivor of the 1979 Cabinet. All the others have retired hurt to the backbenches where ex-government ministers look likely to become the majority. But the latest resignation on 1 November, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Commons, erstwhile Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary and Yes-man, shook the Conservative Party to its roots.

Everyone knew that he had plenty of dirt to dish if he chose to. On 13 November Sir Geoffrey said 'Yes, yes, yes' and delivered a devastating critique of Thatcher's leadership to an electric and expectant House of Commons. It was all very Parliamentary of course: much talk of loyalty to the PM and loyalty to the nation... 'a conflict of loyalty with which I have perhaps wrestled too long.' It could probably have been summed up in a word\*, but Howe had decided that the humiliations of 700 Cabinet meetings over 18 years (and not least the loss of his country house when he was demoted to Deputy PM) deserved at least 18 minutes worth of blistering sweet revenge.

Howe's resignation was timed to do maximum damage. Coming soon after serious mauling at a succession of by-elections starting with Eastbourne, and in time for a possible challenger to Thatcher's leadership, no-one can doubt that Howe intended to put an end to the Prime Minister and to a conflict which has simmered, with occasional eruptions, since the Westland crisis in January 1986. Then, Michael Heseltine walked out of the Cab-

inet and Leon Brittan was forced to resign in an ugly row over the sale of Westlands helicopter factory to US (as opposed to European) interests.

The current crisis began when Thatcher accused the European Commission of seeking 'to extinguish democracy', and France and Germany of edging towards 'Fortress Europe' in the wake of the Rome mini-summit. 'No! No! No!' screamed Thatcher, looking every bit like Ridley writ large. In the space of a few long minutes of PM Question Time, Thatcher had undermined all the work of her ministers smoothing relations in Europe. 'It is rather like sending your opening batsmen to the crease, only to find the bats have been broken before the match by the team captain', summed up Howe on 13 November, employing Thatcher's cricketing analogy of the night before, at the Guildhall banquet, to much greater effect.

The question of Europe has been at the heart of every Cabinet crisis since Westland. Lawson's resignation in October 1989 was as much a question of ERM as it was the humiliation of Thatcher's reliance on Walters' ad-

vice rather than her Chancellor. But now there is an additional factor beyond the ERM, EMS, EMU and ECU. It is ERD - Election, Recession, Defeat - and it is causing a collective outbreak of cold sweat among Tory backbenchers who now regard the Prime Minister and many of her policies as a definite 'No! No! No!' in an election campaign.

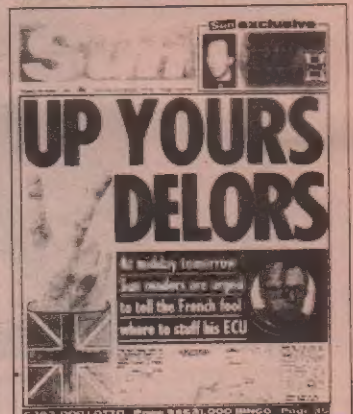
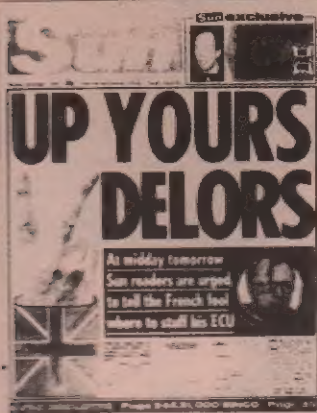
As we go to press, Heseltine has launched his bid to oust Thatcher, but the daggers were drawn by Conservative Central Office mafia well in advance. Soon after Howe's resignation they had cut the time allocated for leadership elections by two weeks to give any opponent as little time as possible to campaign. They also despatched a few heavies to a meeting of Heseltine's constituency to engineer a frosty response to Heseltine's open letter which had criticised Thatcher. At last free market competition had arrived in the Tory Party, and they didn't like it one bit. 'Divisive', they chorused. 'Like exchanging diamonds for costume jewellery', said Nicholas Fairbairn MP. 'If we have a contest now, what am I to say to the troops about the whole country being

behind you?', whined Tom King from the Saudi desert. What indeed.

Recognising that if he is to win, he will need the votes of the 75 Tory MPs who represent marginals (in a 5% swing), Heseltine has widened the issue away from Europe, to include the issues which will decide the next election: poll tax, income tax, public spending and interest rates. But then he was ever the opportunist. Heseltine may also have frightened the opposition. In the space of a few days he has adopted the mainstays of Labour Party policy which have taken them ten years of moving to the right to achieve. However, in the glee that accompanies any chance of the Prime Minister getting her come-uppance (to the Lords?), we should not forget that Heseltine is just another wretched Tory: he brought cruise missiles to Britain, prosecuted and gaoled Sara Tisdall, prosecuted (and failed to gao!) Clive Ponting, and set up his own department to spread disinformation about CND. He is also just as jingoistic and bellicose as the most ardent supporter of the Gulf War (Gerald Kaufman).

No matter what the outcome of the leadership election, it is now clear that the Tories are in deep trouble. Thatcher will emerge at least seriously wounded from this crisis, and whoever wins the leadership election will face rampant capitalist recession. For the British working class, getting rid of Thatcher is only the first and probably the easiest of the battles to come. But like Madame Defarge, we can enjoy watching the heads roll. ■

\* Richard Needham MP (aka 6th Earl of Kilmore) was forced to apologise after a mobile phonecall to his wife Sissy was intercepted by the IRA: he called the PM 'a cow'.



doch's Sun with its Union Jack-clad V-sign and its 'Up yours Delors' mentality was to no avail. The response from those seriously concerned with the long term interests of British business and finance was swift. Enough was enough. She had to be stopped. Howe resigned and Heseltine took on the challenge. The ruling class will see that Britain is integrated into Europe and if the Tory Party cannot get a new leader to act in the long term interests of British capital then no doubt the Labour Party, with its newly found passion for Europe, will do.

Britain has entered the ERM with the pound significantly overvalued. At this rate British industry is uncompetitive. Wage settlements of more than 10 per cent are now needed for workers to maintain living standards. This is some four to five per cent higher than the going rate in Germany. So a recession is inevitable. Unemployment will rapidly rise as the ruling class attempts to drive wages down. In or out of Europe the capitalist system does not change. Whatever happens, the working class will be expected to pay for the crisis. ■



NEWS  
in brief**Strike against sexism**

Following a sexual assault on a woman worker by a supervisor, postal workers in Oxford staged a six day strike. The strike was supported by postal workers throughout Oxfordshire, leaving postal services paralysed.

The workers were protesting about the failure to suspend the offender. Management refused to investigate while the workers were on strike. Only when the strike threatened to escalate did they take disciplinary action against the supervisor, demoting him and relocating him to Banbury. A new procedure for investigating future complaints of harassment has been introduced.

Women workers have too long faced sexual harassment without support. The majority of the Oxford strikers were men and the fact that workers took such militant action is an optimistic sign for the future.

**One law for the poor...**

Magistrates have been given new powers to deduct unpaid fines from social security benefits rather than send fine defaulters to gaol.

Around 90% of the 17,000 people gaoled annually for non-payment of fines are dependent on benefit. For many these deductions could be taken on top of deductions for rent and fuel arrears and the poll tax. Current legislation means that everything but 10p of a person's weekly benefit can be deducted at source.

**... another for the rich...**

If you're well-heeled however, you should get a better deal. Gerald Ronson, gaoled for a year for his part in the Guinness Fraud (the bourgeoisie call it the Guinness 'Affair'), was allowed out for medical treatment. 'Nothing unusual here', says the Home Office. Ronson was picked up by his chauffeur-driven car and driven to Wimpole Street for a medical. To save him waiting around for test results, he was then driven home to Hampstead, where wife, family and business colleagues just happened to have laid on a slap-up lunch. Ronson is suffering stress. Remember Giuseppe Conlon!

**... and yet another for police**

Talking about stress... as Sir Peter Imbert recovers from a heart attack during his daily ride - on a horse - in Hyde Park, more British bobbies have been letting the side down despite a campaign for a better image.

Seven bobbies from City Road station in east London were recommended for dismissal after a secret disciplinary tribunal found them guilty of slicing off a man's ear and beating him up in a pub in 1987. At the time the DPP refused to prosecute, so despite a stressful three year wait, they've all been on full-pay...

Ex-Chief Constable for the West Midlands, Geoffrey Dear, now Inspector of Constabulary for West Midlands and Wales, 'welcomed' a special inquiry into why he failed to secure the offices of the notorious Serious Crime Squad after it was disbanded under suspicion of corruption. In the three days that the offices were 'insecure', the disbanded bobbies held a farewell party and, oddly enough, six files, seven notebooks and other documents went missing. There is no truth in the rumour...

PC Surinder Singh won his case of racial discrimination against the Notts Force. Alongside 20 white and three black officers, PC Singh applied to join CID. 19 white officers succeeded. White detectives giving evidence during a desperate defence, testified why the terms 'wog' and 'spook' were common parlance, and 'nigger boy' mere banter. So much for improved PR. Back to the drawing board Sir Peter... perhaps a spot of convalescence in an Open Prison...

## Police and Militant attack Poll Tax protesters

LORNA REID

**20,000 people demonstrated against the Poll Tax in London on 20 October. They came despite the Militant-controlled All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation's attempt to downplay serious mobilisation for the march. Having no choice but to hold the demonstration, the Federation set out to control the route and character of the march. They were determined to assert their control over the movement.**

The demonstration wound its way through south London, nowhere near Trafalgar Square - the scene of battles between police and anti-Poll Tax demonstrators on 31 March. The Federation wanted to prove they are not a threat to the state and, most importantly, not a threat to the electoral interests of the Labour Party.

Despite their claim to support the defendants from the Battle of Trafalgar Square, the Federation refused to support the demonstrations outside Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court and Brixton Prison called by the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign (TSDC) on the same day. Their main purpose on 20 October was to distance themselves completely from the forces who have the potential to take the movement beyond the boundaries of Labour Party

respectability.

The resistance to the police attack on the 2,000-strong demonstration outside Brixton Prison threatened to tarnish the clean image of the Federation. Therefore, they had to disown those who had taken part in the Brixton protest. In a letter to the TSDC, the Federation attacked the organisers of the protest as 'irresponsible' and claimed that some of the TSDC's supporters are racist and agents provocateurs.

The allegation of racism is repeated in *Militant* (26 October) and refers to 'racist abuse against a South African speaker'. The South African comrade spoke towards the end of the rally in Brockwell Park after demonstrators had left for Brixton Prison. The comrade received an enthusiastic response from the people still in the park when he encouraged them to shout 'No!' to the Poll Tax and 'No!' to apartheid. I was on the platform when the comrade spoke and can confirm that at no point was he subjected to racist abuse. Heckling which did take place was directed against Tony Benn and Steve Nally, Federation secretary.

The allegation that agents provocateurs exist within the ranks of the TSDC is an old chestnut. Militant attempted to portray the Battle of Trafalgar Square as the work of provocateurs because they cannot accept that

working class people are prepared to fight back against state repression in the teeth of Labour Party opposition.

In their letter this allegation refers specifically to people heckling Tony Benn MP and Steve Nally who had beer cans thrown at him. Steve Nally is widely known throughout the movement as a copper's nark after he threatened to hand names over to the police following the Battle of Trafalgar Square. Lest he forget this, there were many in Brockwell Park who reminded him. Tony Benn was heckled when he referred to his support for sanctions against Iraq.

To maintain their Labour Party credentials Militant ran away from Trafalgar Square and ran no risks by not attending the Brixton protest. They will not recognise that an independent working class current exists beyond the limited electoral aspirations of the Labour Party. Instead they use the language of the bourgeoisie to condemn anyone they cannot politically control.

The police attack outside Brixton Prison was preplanned and resulted in 135 arrests and dozens of injuries. Three thousand police were on standby, a PA system was prevented by the police from being taken to Brixton Prison, the stewards had their megaphones snatched from them and were prevented from communicating with each other, riot police were deployed immediately, a tube train was on standby at Brixton to transport 'police and prisoners' and Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court had been booked a week in advance for defendants from Brixton.



Police violently attack Poll Tax protesters at Brixton

For the police Brixton was an opportunity to avenge their humiliation at Trafalgar Square on 31 March. Dave Cairney from Southampton was struck on the head from behind when he verbally protested at the way a demonstrator was arrested. As he was held on the ground he was struck by a truncheon above his left eye.

When held in the grounds of Brixton prison for nearly one hour Dave saw the police beat defendants and was taunted about his injuries:

'I was bleeding profusely, my eye closed with blood. I was told that if I didn't sit still I'd get the other eye done. Other officers gloated, "You came second best this time. Were you there on 31 March?"

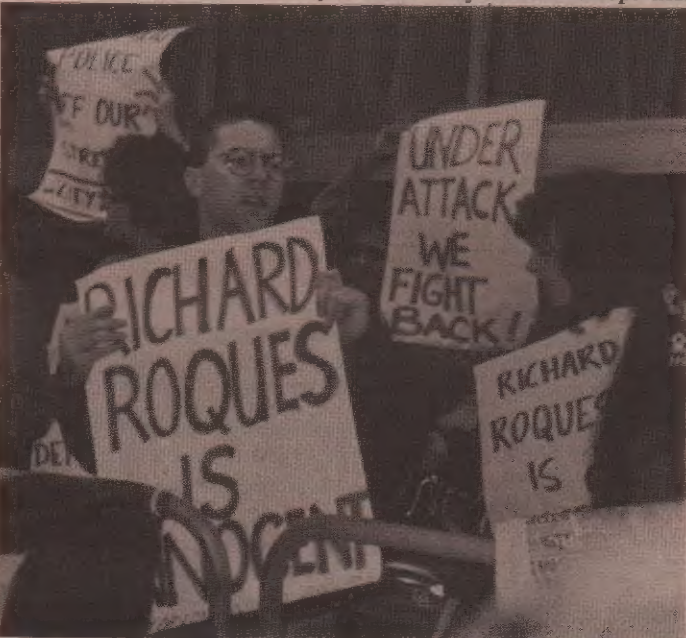
I saw a policeman use his helmet as a club on a boy's knees to force him to sit with

his legs straight on ground. Another policeman beat a boy's ankles with a truncheon and threatened to break his legs.'

Dave required four stitches to his head wound and was charged with Affray.

Immediately following the latest police riot, Chief Superintendent Metcalfe, responsible for policing the demonstration called for future anti-Poll Tax marches in London to be banned. This was echoed by Home Secretary, David Waddington.

The real criminals from Trafalgar Square and Brixton are still at large. They are the police who are attempting to smash the who are prepared to stand up and fight for their living standards and democratic rights. Genuine communists support those who are being criminalised for waging this fight. ■



Richard Roques, RCG member and treasurer for City AA, was tried at Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court on 31 October on charges of Criminal Damage to the South African embassy, Disorderly Behaviour and Assault Police. No evidence was offered on the charges of Disorderly Behaviour and Assault Police. Richard pleaded guilty to causing £22.29 worth of damage to the South African embassy. He was given a conditional discharge for one year. Sixty people demonstrated outside the court in support of Richard and addressing people after the trial Richard made no apology for damaging the embassy and called for support for all those who have been sentenced or are still awaiting trial on charges from Trafalgar Square and Brixton.

## Executions in Turkey

In October 1990, the issue of the executions of political prisoners in Turkey re-entered the political agenda. Since the coup in 1980 the public and military prosecutors have indicted more than 7,000 people for capital punishment and 287 have been condemned and their files are waiting in parliament to be approved. 50 of those condemned have already been executed. The last execution, of Hidir Aslan-Devrimci, was on 25 October, 1984.

Since the beginning of the new academic year in October 1990, many demonstrations have been organised in order to protest against the reactionary education system at universities

and to demand more academic rights. The students have also raised their voice against the war against the Kurds. The police have shown the familiar attitude to the demonstrating students: many of them, including 15 and 16 year old high school students, have been arrested and beaten up.

Today we are calling all progressive and democratic individuals and institutions to condemn the Turkish government and its representatives in the UK. ■

Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Path) Supporters in London

For further information contact: 148-150 Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16. Tel: 071-226 8647

## Unnatural wastage in museums

GAVIN SCOTT

The end of October was the deadline for Minister of Arts, David Mellor, to announce his final decision on cuts at the Natural History Museum (NHM), London. The proposed cuts included over 60 redundancies. Now, the workers who refused to leave have been told that a decision has not been reached.

The management announced their plan in April to the staff in a totally dictatorial way. Some union reps were barred from meetings. Managers refused to answer questions or give anything in writing. This led to local strike action for the first time ever when members of the IPMS and CPSA unions walked out for a day.

The areas of work threatened are exhibition-designing and science. Removal of promotion prospects for those on lower grades, and a higher proportion of staff on short-term, lower paid, conditionless contracts are also threatened.

The science mainly done at the Museum is taxonomy, the classification of species. Scientists from all over the world, at the instigation of members of the IPMS Branch, protested at the cuts in their hundreds, explaining how their own work will be severely hindered.

In June, the Director of the NHM, Neil Chalmers, attempted to reduce opposition by inviting many leading scientists of other institutions to a meeting to convince them that he had made correct decisions. However, he did not invite some of his fiercest critics and when the IPMS Branch invited the same people, and press, to a pre-meeting, he threatened disciplinary action against organisers, one with dismissal, and tried to ban the press.

The fact that the plan is flawed was virtually admitted by the management in August, when they told three scientists 'at risk' that they could stay.

Problems have been on the horizon at the NHM for well over a year. In 1989 major exhibitions were cancelled and it was admitted that the Museum was in a 'financial situation'. This was after spending £38,000 on redecorating the Director's office-suite twice (even during the dispute, senior managers have had their offices extravagantly redecorated, including chandeliers), £120,000 on a new admissions desk, £30,000 on a management course at Disney World and £55,000 on a 'Corporate Identity' from the marketing company 'Wolff-Olins'.

Tied with this was the launch of the NHM Development Trust Appeal, headed by newly acquired patron, Princess Diana,

to raise £5 million over the next five years for exhibitions, but with intention to contract-out not revealed. Gerald's 'Ronson Foundation' has contributed to the Trust.

Other companies with interests in the Museum include Shell, with a children's 'Discovery Centre' and BP, whose 'Ecology' exhibition will be opened mid-November.

When a plan to charge school parties was uncovered, Chalmers tried to justify it by saying that there was a danger of overcrowding, but if a school party willing to pay they will be allowed in! Education for only those who can afford it.

At other museums, market economics continue to be imposed. At the Museum of London one of the archaeological teams the Greater London Archaeological Unit, is to be cut because apparently, the excavation of important archaeological sites depends on the generosity of profit-hungry developers.

Museums are a public service which have been under constant attack by the Thatcher government. The imposition of her political dogma on them is not just another attack on the right to education of the working class, but also a threat to the heritage which belongs to not just the people of this country but the entire world. ■



**1989-90 • the imperialists herald a new age of 'peace and democracy' • three Frenchmen murder a North African 'just for kicks' • 70,000 racist attacks are reported in Greater London • Belgian police look on passively as a group of youths daub a group of North Africans with swastikas • swastikas and anti-semitic graffiti appear in major Polish cities • Jewish graves throughout Europe are desecrated, mosques and synagogues are firebombed.**

THIS PAGE WAS WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY CHRIS JAMES, CAT WIENER AND MAXINE WILLIAMS

# The rising tide of racism in Europe

Less than 50 years after the defeat of Hitler and the fascist movement, their direct heirs are once again on the march. This wave of racist and antisemitic violence underwrites the electoral successes of fascist and far-right groups who have 21 seats at the European parliament, including Jean-Marie Le Pen (leader of the French Front National), Franz Schönhuber (a former Waffen-SS officer who heads the German Republikaner Party) and the Italian MSI. In recent local elections in Dreux, France, the Front National received 60 per cent of the vote.

It is no accident that the ugliest face of nationalism should once again be on display. Whilst imperialism and racism have always gone hand-in-hand, these are particularly dangerous times in Europe. Firstly, although the European capitalist states (with the exception of Thatcher's Britain) seem inclined towards greater unity, the reality is not so straightforward. They may be about to climb into bed together, but they all want the best side of the bed for themselves. Underlying the happy European family will be economic rivalry. This is the first breeding ground for nationalism and xenophobia.

At the same time a strong Europe can act to compete against the other great imperialist blocs—Japan and the US. A 'strong Europe' philosophy will itself be the second breeding ground of racism. The aggrandisement of Europe will be at the expense of the poor and oppressed nations. The black and immigrant populations in the European countries are already feeling the effect. Italy has just introduced immigration controls to keep out North Africans. Fortress Europe will be predominantly white.

The third factor is the defeat of the socialist countries. The Cold War is over because the imperialists have won. The spoils of war are very large: Eastern Europe will suffer the fate of the defeated. Within those countries, to a varying degree, the social and economic effects of the defeat will unleash some terrible forces. Gone are the anti-fascist laws of the GDR, and fascist groups are openly organising here as in other parts of Eastern Europe. And as poverty and social instability grow, so too will racism and inter-ethnic conflict. The burning down of a gypsy village in Romania is only the first of many fires to come.

On the wider ideological and practical political level, socialism is no longer able to act as an organised force against reaction. This is not a theoretical point. It was communist and socialist forces which led and inspired the fight against fascism in Europe in the twenties and thirties. Those forces of the left are today in disarray and decline.

## FASCISM ON THE MARCH

These factors underlie the rise of racism and of overtly fascist and chauvinist tendencies in Europe. The extent of the problem varies between countries. It is in Germany and particularly in France that it appears most alarming.

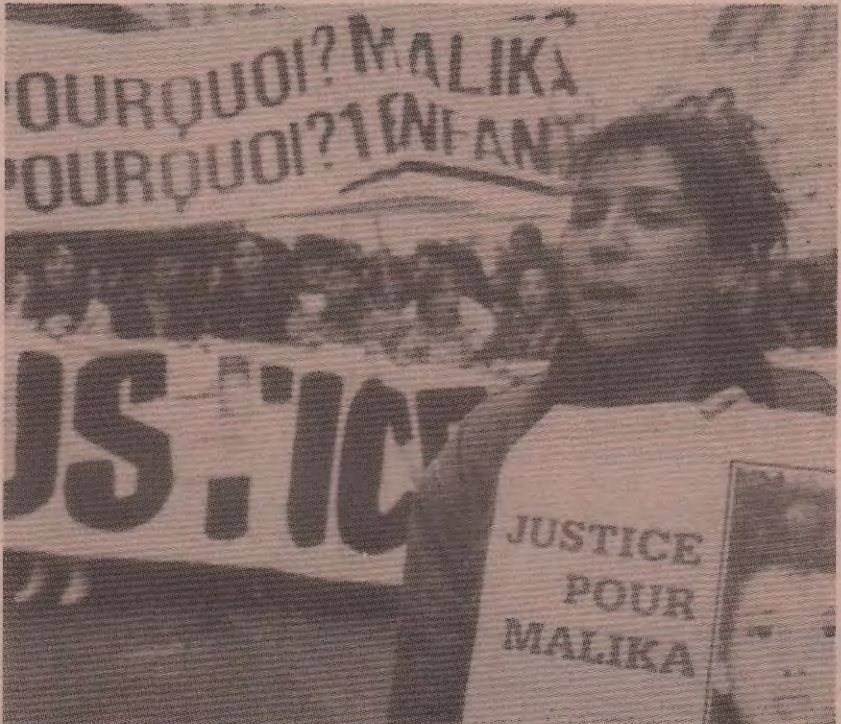
**Germany** In a recent survey, 75 per cent of West Germans said there were too many foreigners in their country. In the 1989 European elections the far-right Republikaner Party, who want a return of pre-Second World War borders, include ex-SS officers in their ranks and are hostile to the Turkish gastarbeiter, Jewish and gypsy population, received two million votes and six seats. The ruling Christian Democrats are rapidly taking on Republikaner anti-immigration policies in order to maintain support. The recruitment of hardline fascist activists on the street is said to have risen by 28 per cent.

**'Why does the left in Europe not make the issue of racism and fascism central to its political activity?'**

There has been a massive rise in triumphal nationalism alongside unification and Germany's rise as a major imperialist power. Popular video games in which the players kill Turks reflect the growing number of attacks on the 1.5 million Turkish population. Their position is increasingly precarious as labour from East Germany floods in, and 'German jobs for German workers' is a popular slogan for German fascists. Jewish graves have been desecrated in East Germany, which is proving fertile recruiting ground for the fascists.

**France** 76 per cent of French people think there are too many foreigners. Le Pen received 15 per cent of the vote in the general election. Large successes in municipal elections have led to the FN controlling 30 town councils, and thus controlling immigrants' access to housing, schooling etc. The FN also draws support from ex-members of the French Communist Party. The FN has 100,000 members, a daily paper, and 842 elected local representatives.

Increasing attacks on the North African population have left 107 dead in the last seven years, and hundreds of others seriously injured. Recent riots in Lyons against police racism revealed deep-seated anger: over 11 North Africans have been killed by police in the city in the last 10 years. Unemployment amongst the immigrant population is 49 per cent, yet Le Pen's slogan is: 'A million less immigrants, a million more jobs'. 32 Jewish graves were desecrated at Carpentras earlier this year, and there have been attacks on synagogues and mosques.



**Demonstration in France for 14-year-old Malika Moulai, murdered in a racist attack**

**Italy** 51 per cent of Italians think that there is an influx of foreigners which should be discouraged. In a poll in Florence, 37 per cent of those questioned thought that all immigrants should be repatriated. The Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) received 5.5 per cent of the vote in the 1989 European elections. Although the MSI former leader Giorgio Almirante was a minister in Mussolini's government, the MSI tries to play down its fascist image. However, it has strong links with individuals and organisations which carry out violent attacks. Massimo Abbatangelo, who was accused of involvement in a bombing in which 17 people were killed, has just become an MSI member of parliament. There has been a spate of violent racist attacks in several major towns. In February, 200 masked people armed with iron bars systematically beat up black and gypsy people on Carnival night. Regional organisations with extremely chauvinistic policies are also growing rapidly in Northern Italy.

**'The aggrandisement of Europe will be at the expense of the poor and oppressed nations'**

**Britain** The official estimate is that there are 30,000 racist attacks per year, while independent groups estimate 70,000. 7,000 assaults were reported in the first three months of 1990 in London. The BNP claims 1,500 members and recently won 12.1 per cent of the vote in a Tower Hamlets council by-election. State racism is clear at all levels: Thatcher's belief that Britain is in danger of being swamped by 'alien' cultures; police involvement in attacks on black people and their ignoring of racist attacks. Courts are extremely reluctant to admit there is a racist motive in attacks and murders of black people. Immigration controls split families: 50 per cent of husbands and fiancées from the Indian subcontinent are refused permission to join their spouses here. The past 18 months has also seen an escalation of anti-semitic attacks.

1960s. In the 1970s the French Communist Party pursued racist policies, such as bulldozing a local immigrant hostel in Vitry. They have now paid the price electorally as their working class base has reasoned, 'Why vote for shamefaced racism when the Front National does it so much better!' The Socialist-controlled council in Lille has refused permission to build a mosque since 1985. In Brussels all parties except the Ecologists agreed a ban on foreigners living in six boroughs. European socialist and communist parties, far from acting as a pole of opposition to racism, have rendered it more respectable. As racism grows they will present none but the most cosmetic opposition.

Since the Second World War it has become common to ask how the rise of fascism and Nazism was ignored until it became a monster. The question would be more relevant translated into today's conditions: why does the left in Europe not make the issue of racism and fascism central to its political activity? Will the steady flow of blood from stabbed, beaten and mutilated Arabs in France, Turks in Germany, Asians in Britain have to become a river before the left wakes up?

**'And as poverty and social instability grow so will racism and inter-ethnic conflict'**

For what is at stake is both the defence of black and immigrant groups and the future of the left in Europe. If from the collapsed ruin of what has passed for socialism and communism in western Europe, a healthy new movement is to be built, it will have to have on its leading banner 'Against imperialism, against racism, against fascism'. Or it will have no banner at all.

Factual information for this article came from the *Report into Racism and Xenophobia* produced by a European Parliament Committee of Inquiry (July 1990).

## A FESTERING SORE

It is clear that racism and the growth of fascism will be the political issue of the 1990s. However, the foundations of these developments were laid decades ago.

In the post-war period European countries came to rely on immigrant labour brought in to do the least attractive and worst-paid jobs. Immigrants with residence rights faced continuous discrimination in employment as well as disproportionate unemployment. Those without permanent residence faced all this plus absolute insecurity.

This international reserve army of labour has always been a feature of imperialism. It is drawn from the poor and oppressed nations—the very nations whose poverty is a precondition for the wealth of the imperialist nations. The fundamentally unequal relation between the oppressed and oppressor nations lies at the root of racism. Millions of people trek across the world to flee poverty and degradation and when they arrive in Europe find either a 'Keep Out' sign or the opportunity to shovel the waste of people who throw away more than the poor nations possess.

It is this perversion of human social relations which is the festering sore at the heart of politics in the imperialist nations. Racism is inescapably the central issue of political life and it is on this issue that the far-right is thriving—with potentially devastating consequences.

They have been allowed to thrive partly because so little opposition to racism has been mobilised, politically, culturally or morally. And prime culprits for this are the European social democratic parties who, like the British Labour Party, have either acquiesced in the face of racism or actively participated. It was a Labour government which first introduced openly racist immigration laws in the

## Zionist = Racist

Black members of the Newham Monitoring Project were excluded from a recent public meeting against anti-semitism. The Jewish Awareness Group was responsible for this racist and divisive action. It is no surprise that JAG should do this. It is a Zionist organisation thoroughly opposed to Palestinian liberation. Moreover, it deliberately confuses anti-semitism and anti-Zionism. Such forces have no place in the anti-fascist movements.

## 1992 – racist unity

A common European market. The right to freedom of movement to find work; the right to family unity. But for whom?

Not the estimated 16 million non-EC nationals currently resident in the EC. They will face growing job insecurity, worsening living conditions, possible deportation.

Not black EC nationals either. For them, harassment when crossing 'relaxed' border controls; spot checks at work, college etc; possible compulsory carrying of identity cards.

Plans for a common EC policy on immigration and visas are currently being devised. That they are surrounded by an official silence is ominous. That they will be racist is certain.

## CALL TO ACTION

The Revolutionary Communist Group has sent an appeal for an exchange of information and ideas to anti-racist groups and individuals in Europe, and suggested a conference on a pan-European basis. We would like to hear from progressive groups everywhere. The discussion and mobilisation have to start now.



German reunification did not represent the free and democratic merger of the two Germanies. It represented the enlargement of imperialist Germany and the extinction of socialist Germany. West Germany, already the strongest economic and military power in Europe, is now potentially even more powerful.

Amidst the celebrations few opposition voices were heard. Yet many people in the GDR recognised that whatever the imperfections of their previous political system, it had guaranteed certain rights – for women to work and have childcare and access to abortion; employment for all; social security; education. Although the GDR has been portrayed as an economic wreck the picture is much exaggerated. By 1971, in spite of large war reparations to the Soviet Union and no share of the vast Marshall Aid which West Germany received, the GDR was already the eighth most powerful industrial nation in the world. There are no longer any guarantees for the GDR people.

The bourgeois commentators on German reunification kept emphasising that West Germany had cast off its fascist past and been safely democratic for 40 years. This carefully buries the true history. In fact, it was only in the GDR that denazification took place. In the West, Britain and the USA collaborated with the German capitalist class to ensure that denazification simply did not happen. In the GDR, 25,000 Nazis were prosecuted whereas in the West, Britain and the USA prosecuted less than 2,000 people. The Germans themselves managed to prosecute only 15 people for the murders of millions in concentration camps.

The Potsdam Agreement had been clear that all Nazis would be removed from power and that German industry would be decartelised. But by the 1950s the German industrialists and bankers, who had bankrolled the Nazis and benefited from the plunder of Europe, were sitting in the boardrooms counting the profits of peace.

The names are familiar: Siemens (electrical goods) – used slave labour from Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. BMW – used slave labour from Dachau. IG Farben (chemicals) was so keen that it built its own slave labour camp – IG Auschwitz. 100,000 people died in the Farben Auschwitz camp. Krupp, the giant armaments concern, used slave



## Those who do not remember the past are forced to relive it

The first Mayor of West Berlin described his city as a 'handle' which could be used to 'push open the door to the East'. He would not have predicted that it would take 40 years to open the door. On 3 October 1990, the German Democratic Republic ceased to exist. MAXINE WILLIAMS examines the credentials of the 'democratic' west.

labour extensively. It fed its slave labourers 350 calories a day; their average life expectancy was three months. In trials that were a fiasco, the US and British reluctantly prosecuted these industrialists. Krupp got 12 years and his fortune was confiscated in 1948. In 1951 he was released and all his wealth returned to him. The Deutschbank grew fourfold under the Nazis, benefiting from the seizure of banks and industry and

funds in subjugated nations. One of its directors, Herman Abs, was rescued by the British from arrest as a war criminal and subsequently became chair of the Deutschbank. In 1969 no less than seven of the Bundesbank's 20-man council were ex-Nazis.

These were the men with whom the USA and Britain could do business and could trust to build a German bulwark against commun-

ism. In politics the same applied. In Adenauer's post-war government, Franz Thedieck was State Secretary in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He had betrayed anti-Nazis to the Gestapo. Finance was in the hands of Alfred Hartmann who had supervised the Nazi confiscation of Jewish property. Refugees were in the hands of Rudolf Senteck – who served as a senior SS officer in the Nazi Race and Resettlement Office.

The senior ranks of the legal profession were overwhelmingly former Nazis. When the GDR exposed this the Bundestag passed a law allowing judges to retire on full pension if they 'felt themselves morally implicated by their activities in the Third Reich'. In comparison it is worth noting that following reunification, all judges of the former GDR were sacked.

Nazis who had supervised mass extermination got pensions. But, for instance, a former concentration camp inmate was refused and told that 'camp's low fat diet must have been good for his health'. The widow of a man murdered for taking a collective for a communist's widow was refused because he had collected money for a supporter of a 'tyrannical regime'.

Small wonder that in 'democratic' West Germany, communists were barred from holding public sector jobs such as teaching. That the left should have been regarded as a virus. That the kidnapping of an industrialist by the Red Army group in 1971 should have led to the declaration of a national state of emergency in which the police could arrest without cause and indefinitely detain anybody. That the German economic miracle should owe so much to low paid and insecure immigrant labour from oppressed nations.

These are West Germany's democratic credentials. And they are showing how worthy they are by today's witch-hunting communists from the former GDR with a zeal they never displayed in relation to Nazis. Thus not only are alleged East German spies being hunted down but also the headquarters of the PDS (former Communist Party of East Germany) were recently raided by a large force of armed police. Alongside this there is a rise in nationalism and increasingly racist treatment of immigrant workers and their families. No wonder there are no illusions about the character of opposition parties in West Germany. The German SPD grew up murdering communists and has spent the post war years as a staunch supporter of German capitalism and Nato. It was as keen on devouring the GDR as the conservatives were. Genuine left forces in the new Germany have an uphill struggle ahead of them. We print extracts here of three letters from readers in Germany which portray their feelings about reunification. ■

### EAST AND WEST – FEAR AND HATRED

#### East Germany

##### GERHARD

Unemployment, until now a foreign word for us, now stands in the former GDR at over 7%, in some towns it is over 15% and it is increasing.

... the former GDR is becoming the poorhouse of Germany... For the same work we earn a third to a quarter of the wages which are paid in West Germany... My flat now costs 80DM (for 56 sq m, heating and hot water). From January the price will rise to between two and three times as much and rises are projected up to 700DM.

For several weeks I've been asking myself how it could have happened. We were gullible, had noticed that something wasn't working or was false but we thought it would soon pass, that it was a minor illness. One thing we all did wrong: we underestimated the enemy. We thought he was weak. We communists in our grassroots groups trusted our leadership too much, didn't control them and that was a bad mistake!... I believe that socialism will return to Germany some time. Probably then it will come from Africa or Asia to Europe I think.

I think it's sure that socialism isn't only an error or an episode in mankind. The work of millions of communists and socialists will not be free of charge.

##### CLAUDIA

It is nearly four weeks now that the two Germanies are 'reunited' but time and

again I catch myself thinking, perhaps hoping, that it's just a bad joke. That happens when I see the lad next door who was drafted to the National People's Army of the GDR in September and wore the corresponding uniform – now he is sporting a 'West German' one. Over night from an army of the Warsaw Pact into a NATO one... Gone are the plaques with the old coat of arms – replaced by the Bundesadler, the (West) German black eagle on yellow ground... Well, the disappearance of the GDR flag wasn't too surprising, after all, this was a gradual process since the last government of this country was a conservative one that felt very close to Bonn from its very first day.

Women are perhaps hit the hardest. 90 per cent and more used to work, now they get fired first. Only every fourth new job goes to a woman. On an average, women earned less than men – in the GDR, as the traditional 'female' jobs were paid worse. The average unemployment benefit is 550-600 marks (£200) – and women get correspondingly less, which is especially critical for the hundreds of thousands of single mothers in this country... So it's social welfare time for millions, including all those school graduates no plant can afford to train now, threatened with closure anyway. In a poll, 30 per cent of young East Germans said they would like to try drugs. Another phenomenon unknown here so far.

... Crime is one of the few things that has been really flourishing over the past few months... Now it is 300 cases of street crime a day in Berlin alone (a 35 per

cent increase compared with last year) and robberies have gone up by 100 per cent... There is growing xenophobia in this country. It is directed mainly against the Vietnamese and Mozambican contract labourers who were brought in to the country in large numbers (around 200,000) a few years ago, when there was still a manpower shortage. Now the locals resort to the well-known argument that the foreigners are taking their jobs, and perhaps their women and their flats. Which is more than foolish. The foreigners were dismissed first, the rents for the five square metres (!) of space they are entitled to in the hostels where three or four have to share a room for years, were increased several times and are astronomical: £100-200.

The smart and rich West Germans have taken over and tell former GDR citizens they have no idea about market economy (how could they?), about how to work and live properly. They should even repeat their driving tests 'cos how can you possibly drive proper cars on proper roads when all you learned was to jump from pothole to pothole in your funny Trabant? ... So in addition to the deeply-rooted inferiority complex people over here had suffered... there is a new, at least equally painful one. It is actually the West Germans with the better (or at least more appropriate) qualifications who are coming over and taking their jobs or just decide that their plant must be closed down – but how could you blame them? So they are looking for a weaker victim to take it out on. And find the foreigners. ■

#### West Germany

##### GUNTHER

'Wir sind das Volk!' ('We are the people') is what thousands shouted in October/November 1989 in many cities of the German Democratic Republic. They and their supporters in the FRG immediately answered the question regarding who was meant by 'the people': the German people. By 'German', they mean of course white and mid-European.

For several years, a new German nationalism has come into existence which receives clear and open expression. The promotion and praising of all things German has been brought to life since the economic crisis at the beginning of the 1980s. Capitalism was not to be held responsible for high unemployment; instead, it was to be the foreign workers, particularly those from Turkey. Sums of money were paid out by the government to foreign persons or families in order to encourage them to return home.

Spurred on by the press and media, slogans such as 'Turks go home' started appearing on the walls of buildings and houses. The next group of people under attack was to be those seeking asylum in the FRG. These people became subjected to an even harsher attack by the conservative media and government: the percentage of persons granted political asylum sank to lower than 5%.

The majority of asylum-seekers are forced to live in camps; for a total of five years they are forbidden to work. In 1989, 15 Turks and Kurds died in racist attacks. On 31 October 1990, the Federal Constitu-

tional Court passed a resolution refusing foreigners living in the FRG the right to vote in local council elections... on the one hand, it is made clear that only German people have the right to vote and, on the other hand, the possibility of nationals from member states of the EC being granted the right to vote in local council elections within the context of united Europe is also stated. The large group of foreigners in the FRG are Turks and Kurds stemming from Turkey; thus, such foreigners are reduced to the status of 'second-class foreigners'.

Racial hatred is currently being levelled at people from other nations such as Africa and Asia as well as at Turks and Kurds; this is particularly the case in the former GDR. Every day, Vietnamese and Mozambicans get beaten up and organised attacks are carried out at the weekends on their hostels. The authorities show no reaction and the police only turn up after the attack is over.

This situation is likely to worsen when a new law regarding the rights of foreigners comes into effect on 1 January 1991. This law will totally remove the right of political activity for foreigners and asylum-seekers will have no other option than to live in camps until the decision has been passed regarding their asylum status. The 'nice' foreigners from EC countries will be granted a better political status and all other foreigners should be forced to leave the country.

This combination of state promoted hostility towards foreigners and racism from among the population itself will lead to an even greater degree of racial hatred and a more intensive glorification of all things German. ■



# INTERNATIONALISM MEANS SAVING THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

The Cuban revolution is facing one of the greatest tests in its nearly 32 year history. Many of Cuba's economic and development plans have been severely set back following the growing disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the east European socialist bloc. On top of this has come the rapid escalation in the price of oil resulting from the Gulf crisis. Compounding these problems is the ever present and ever more rigorous US blockade of the country.

To defend the revolution, and therefore socialism, Cuba has been forced to enter a 'special period' — a national economic emergency to ensure its economic and political survival. The defence of the Cuban revolution is of prime concern to communists everywhere for it is intimately bound up with the defence of Marxism-Leninism and the communist standpoint. In these difficult times for communists it has fallen on the Cuban people to be the standard-bearers of revolutionary ideas, to defend them in practice by ensuring the survival of their revolution. DAVID REED reports on the political response of Fidel Castro to the latest problems facing the Cuban revolution.\*

The economic setbacks and the inevitable hardship forced on the Cuban people offer fertile ground for dissident and counter-revolutionary groups to organise against the revolution. Undoubtedly US imperialism will seize every opportunity to sustain and promote these groups as it tightens its economic blockade against Cuba. To confront these problems the Cuban Communist Party, far from retreating as communist parties have done elsewhere, is conducting an unrelenting ideological struggle in defence of socialism and socialist principles. By pointing to the just and admirable forms of economic cooperation which existed between Cuba and the Soviet Union, by showing the superiority of socialist methods of confronting the present crisis, Castro is conducting an ideological struggle not only to win over the Cuban people but also to build support for socialist Cuba and for socialism among the peoples of Latin America and the Third World.

## THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA

While asserting the independence of the Cuban revolution, 'nobody made it for us, nobody defended it for us, nobody saved it for us', Castro points to the political and economic importance of Cuba's relation to the Soviet Union. That the October revolution took place was 'a privilege, a stroke of good fortune... for our revolution'. In the days when some people want to smash statues of Lenin into pieces, 'we feel the figure of Lenin growing in our hearts and our thoughts.' He reminds people of Lenin's historical significance:

'Lenin's work has endured throughout history and has helped to change the world. Lenin's work meant the emergence of the first socialist state in human history, and this state saved humanity from fascism... The first socialist state meant an advance for the peoples' liberation movements and the end of colonialism, and it meant so much to us when the imperialists wanted to destroy our Revolution, when they blockaded us and tried to starve us out.'

Political and economic relations were established between Cuba and the Soviet Union based on new and

admirable forms of cooperation 'which signified the end of unequal terms of trade'. Never before was there more justice in the economic relations between industrialised and underdeveloped countries. On that basis Cuban factories were built, agriculture was developed and mechanised and electrification extended throughout the country. On that basis five-year plans between Cuba and the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries were worked out.

When, in a very short period of time, the socialist camp disappeared, Cuba 'abruptly lost the pillars of its economic agreements with many of those countries of the socialist camp'. The Soviet Union 'remains' but it is going through a profound political, economic and social crisis and, because it is the strongest pillar of Cuba's economic and social development, this crisis is having a dramatic impact on Cuba's economy.

The construction of a nuclear power plant built with the help of the Soviet Union has fallen behind. They do not know when it will be ready or whether it will be finished. The Moa nickel plant has been shut down because of shortage of fuel. A recently finished oil refinery cannot be started up because of lack of fuel. There is already a deficit in fuel supplies from the Soviet Union of two million tons as well as major deficits in industrial raw materials including fertilizers which play a vital role in the Cuban economy.

The Soviet government has, however, made great efforts to meet its commitments. It has ignored the threats of the United States which has attempted to make the cessation of Soviet economic cooperation with Cuba the condition for improved Soviet-US relations. Although there are some in the USSR who would put an end to the cooperative relations with Cuba to 'get in good with the empire' that is not the position of the Soviet government. However at the present time no one knows what the basis of Cuba's trade with the Soviet Union is going to be next year: what the Soviet Union will pay for Cuban sugar and other products, what price Cuba will pay for Soviet products and how much fuel will be available.

## OIL AND THE GULF CRISIS

The Gulf crisis has aggravated the problems associated with shortages

of oil. It has become a world tragedy especially for Cuba. The price of oil before the crisis was about \$14 a barrel it has now reached \$40. Trade would be unworkable if Cuba was charged the going price for oil and paid rock bottom prices for its sugar, which is the price called for on the world market but which does not exist anywhere. For example, in trading relations between the European Community nations prices paid for sugar are above the so-called world market price even if there is excess supply.

Cuba consumes some 13 million tons of oil. If war breaks out in the Gulf and the oil price reaches \$50-\$60 a barrel, then, at the current world market price for sugar, Cuba would need some 26 million tons of sugar to acquire 13 million tons of oil. That is an amount in the region of all the sugar sold in the world. With the present price of \$40 a barrel Cuba would require some 18 million tons of sugar.

At the time of the Cuban revolution the price of oil was \$2 a barrel. With less than a million tons of sugar Cuba could purchase all the oil the country consumed. In the intervening period the price of oil has increased nearly 20 times while sugar prices have remained rock bottom. The imperialists are complaining that the Soviet Union pays Cuba too high a price for its sugar but it is oil that has been and is more overpriced than sugar. Sugar is sold to the Soviet Union at a price more or less equivalent to the cost of producing a ton of sugar in the USSR and sometimes cheaper. The price at which Cuba has been buying oil in the past years is far higher than the cost of producing it. 'In truth, oil is one of the most privileged and overpriced products in the world — priced many times higher than the cost of production'.

This is an expression of the difficulties facing Cuba and Castro believes they could still get much worse.

## CUBA CONFRONTS THE 'SPECIAL PERIOD'

If Cuba is to confront a 'special period' in peace time its task must be not just one of survival but also of development. While rationing and shortages of key products are inevitable, the country's basic development programmes such as the food programme would have to be maintained. This means going ahead with the application of science and technology to agriculture to increase the productivity per hectare. Labour power shortages in agriculture have to be overcome. When machine operators cannot work on their machines they must go to the fields. Office workers in agricultural enterprises must be reduced by some 80 per cent. If Cuba is to have the food it requires agricultural workers have to be paid adequate wages even higher than in the city, new homes must be built where needed as well as day-care centres for agricultural workers' children.

The second programme to be maintained is biotechnology, the pharmaceutical industry and research centres because they offer a 'world of resources' to the country. Castro believes that the industry is capable of



FIDEL CASTRO

producing any medication that the imperialists are capable of producing and others that they are not producing. The third programme to be maintained will be the tourist industry which can bring in large revenues for Cuba. These are the top priority programmes. Any economic programme which gives the country something, saves imports, solves an important problem or generates exports will have priority attention. These will be given priority over various social programmes and projects such as building new schools to replace old ones in the capital, although everything that has been started will, if possible, be completed.

Saving fuel will be a priority. Petrol rationing has been introduced and household electricity supplies cut. In agriculture oxen will be trained to replace machinery. 200,000 bicycles have already been bought and arrangements have been made to buy 500,000 more as well as buying machinery to set up five bicycle factories. Sales of electrical appliances will be reduced and no more air conditioners will be sold. If because of shortages of materials etc the hours worked need to be reduced then the emphasis will be on reducing the number of days worked rather than hours per working so as to cut down the number of journeys necessary in travelling to work and so save fuel.

## ONLY A SOCIALIST SYSTEM CAN CONFRONT THESE PROBLEMS

How would the capitalists deal with the kind of problems Cuba faces? They would double or triple the prices of electricity or transportation to deal with a shortfall of fuel. Production would be cut and transportation withdrawn with the inevitable massive loss of jobs. 'Who would be hurt the most, who would it affect? The workers, the poorest sector of the population.'

In a lot of Latin American countries, even before the full effects of the oil crisis, thousands of people are being thrown out on the street, prices are multiplying, the people are harassed and only a minority of the very privileged can solve their problems. The World Bank and IMF 'shock' programmes recommended to many of the formerly socialist countries in eastern Europe, those which have decided to become capitalist, mean millions of people being kicked out on the street and prices go-

ing up.

The Cuban strategy for dealing with the economic crisis rules out mass layoffs and price increases.

'The Revolution will confront the problems during this special period without throwing anyone out of work and without depriving a single citizen of her or his resources... No, we will not abandon a single person — this is a characteristic of our socialism, our system... We are looking at many formulas but none at the expense of the citizenry. At worst, the worker will get more free time but he will never be left out in the street without a job or penniless. That's a truly humane concept.'

'The imperialists talk so much about human rights and their formulas are so ruthless, always at the expense of the workers, always at the expense of the people. That will be the great virtue of our system in dealing with difficulties such as these.'

The crisis in the socialist camp and the energy crisis stemming from the Persian Gulf have created extremely serious problems for the Cuban revolution. Inevitably there will be those who lose their morale and try to spread demoralisation. They have to be confronted. In difficult times the *gusanos* (counter-revolutionaries) raise their heads, attacking socialism and calling for the restoration of capitalism. They must be told, 'Gusano back to your hole'. In defending socialist Cuba, Castro says that the people are being asked to carry out an extraordinary internationalist mission.

'Saving the Revolution in Cuba and saving socialism in Cuba... will be the greatest internationalist service that our people can render humanity'.

Castro is confident that difficult times and setbacks faced by revolutionaries are temporary ones. 'Revolutionary ideas haven't become obsolete... they're going through difficult times but they'll return with added strength.' They will return all the sooner the more injustice, the more exploitation, the more hunger and greater chaos in the world. For the present, however, it falls on the Cuban people to be the standard-bearers of revolutionary ideas, 'to raise them up high, for that's the mission history has assigned to us'. ■

\* Speech on 28 September 1990, *Granma* 14 October 1990



In mid-November the US and British governments conferred on whether they should go again to the UN to get express authority to launch an all-out military strike on Iraq. Mrs Thatcher claims they already have authority to mount an attack under Article 51 of the UN Charter. This was the Article that the government cited to justify its Falklands/Malvinas venture. The US attempted to use it during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. It proclaims the 'inherent right' of individual states to self-defence if under attack.

Kinnock wants any military assault to be authorised by the UN: 'unrelenting pressure must be sustained under the terms of the UN resolutions. And if force should be necessary to implement that policy that too should have the authority of the UN.'

Thatcher and Kinnock transparently uphold imperialism's interests. Tony Benn, however, presents support for UN sanctions against Iraq as an alternative to war and part of a potentially progressive role for the UN. 'The United Nations always used to be paralysed by the cold war and the automatic veto. This no longer exists. We need to think through the role of the United Nations to ensure it is not just a League of Nations club representing the views of rich white ministers but one of genuine democracy. He envisages the UN guaranteeing Middle East borders and fair oil prices. Benn considers the collapse of the socialist bloc an advance for the working class and democracy and views imperialism as an anachronistic policy that can presumably be overturned in a UN General Assembly vote, where, no doubt, oppressed peoples outnumber the oppressor. This is a misrepresentation of what the UN is, why it was formed and what it is doing in the Gulf.

#### THE DIVISION OF THE WORLD AND ITS REGULATION

Forerunner to the UN was the League of Nations which emerged out of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles carving up the German and Ottoman empires and targeting the Bolshevik Revolution. The League ('a league only in name... a pack of wolves that are at all times at each other's throats', Lenin) distributed mandates to govern colonial possessions: Palestine to Britain, Syria to France, Namibia to South Africa etc. The US Senate refused to ratify the Treaty and kept the US out of the League.

The 1924 Geneva Protocol branding aggressive war an act of international crime failed because of British opposition. Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. The League dispatched an inquiry mission. Japan withdrew from the League but European statesmen had no interest in forcing Japan to yield the territory it had seized. Hitler, intent on rearmament, withdrew Germany in 1933, the year that the Soviet Union joined. The League tried to win him back, rather than oppose him. When Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1935, Haile Selassie appealed for the League's help. Sanctions were declared, which Britain and France broke by ensuring Italy vital oil supplies. Italy withdrew from the League and joined Germany in the Spanish Civil War. The League made just one expulsion, the Soviet Union for its occupation of Finland in 1939.

The UN Charter was signed in San Francisco in June 1945. There were 50 signatories but the main motivation for the new organisation came from the US, Britain and the Soviet Union who had signed a United Nations declaration on 1 January 1942. This combined the Allies against the Axis powers and committed the Allies to negotiate 'spheres of influence'. Such negotiations were seldom open: Churchill secretly agreed with Stalin that Soviet influence would extend over Rumania and Bulgaria, British influence over Greece and Yugoslavia. The US, intent on the dismant-

# THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD DIVIDED BY THE IMPERIALISTS

**'I have never been prouder that the United States is the host country for the United Nations. For the first time, the UN Security Council is beginning to work as it was meant to work.' President Bush's statement expresses the pleasure that the US ruling class feels at the collapse of the socialist camp and the absence of any restraint in the UN on the US use of its military might to reassert its position as the leading global power. TREVOR RAYNE examines the history and role of the UN from Yalta to Iraq.**

ling of the British empire as a barrier to its own global aspirations, opposed such deals.

While the US and British ruling classes hoped to use the UN as a means of restraining the Soviet Union internationally, they formed the International Monetary Fund (1945), the World Bank (1946) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (1948) as means of reconstructing and regulating markets for finance capital. The notion of a democratic United Nations representing equally the interests of all peoples was no more present in the minds of its founders than charity has been in the heart of the IMF.

The San Francisco Charter established a General Assembly where all members have a right to one vote each, but whose resolutions are not legally binding, and a Security Council where a negative vote by any one of the now five (US, Britain, France, USSR, China) [then four] permanent members renders the resolution invalid. Power resides in the Security Council where time and again the US and Britain have used their veto. The UN works only so long as the leading powers want it to. Any military forces it has at its disposal are *ad hoc* and deployed with the permission of the major powers. The contending centres of post-1945 were cemented into the structures of the UN; therein lay its purpose and as the global balance of forces change therein will lie its undoing.

#### US NUCLEAR MONOPOLY AND UN POWER

From the start the US weighted the UN in its favour. At Yalta, February 1945, Roosevelt promised Stalin that he would not support the admission of Argentina, a refuge for fascism. In San Francisco the US mobilised its Latin American clients and Argentina was made one of the 50 founder UN states. Between 1946-53, the UN General Assembly adopted over 800 resolutions. The US was defeated in just three per cent. A string of dictatorships voted with the US over 90 per cent of the time. Newly-independent India voted with the US on just 33 per cent of occasions. European socialist countries were at first denied membership of the UN, then prevented by US and British vetoes from serving on the Security Council.

In the period between the San Francisco Conference and the first meeting of the Security Council in London in January 1946 the US had used the atomic bomb on Japan. The London Security Council meeting had alleged Soviet interference in Iran on its agenda. During the Second World War Britain, US and the Soviet Union agreed jointly to occupy Iran to keep its oil in Allied hands; they also agreed to withdraw from Iran after the end of the war and to divide up the oil concessions. When the war ended the US opposed any Soviet claims. In re-



YASSER ARAFAT SPEAKING TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 1968

sponse the Soviet Union backed a revolutionary movement in Azerbaijan province and refused to withdraw its troops unless given oil equivalent to the British concessions. The US used its nuclear monopoly: Iran was not even debated in the Security Council and President Truman summoned Soviet Ambassador Gromyko and told him either the Soviet forces withdrew within 48 hours or the US would drop an atomic bomb on Russia. Soviet forces withdrew. US imperialism got its way with brute force and a threat that rendered the UN irrelevant. With a nuclear monopoly the UN would be an extension of US diplomacy or it would be nothing.

#### PALESTINE

In 1947, with British capital weak and under pressure from the US, the Labour Cabinet placed the fate of Palestine in the hands of the UN. Zionism had allied itself to the newly emerging imperialist ambitions of US capital. On 14 May 1948 Britain relinquished its mandate over Palestine and the Zionist state was declared. Jewish people, who constituted 38 per cent of the population of Palestine, were given by the UN 54 per cent of the land. Within a year Zionist terror gangs expanded their land to 77 per cent of the territory, making three quarters of a million Palestinians homeless, and assassinating the UN mediator Count Bernadotte. Nevertheless, on 11 May 1949 Israel was accepted into the UN General Assembly as a 'peace loving state'.

Resolution 194 (III) was passed in December 1948 providing for the return of Palestinian refugees and governing the status of Jerusalem. Its provisions have been reasserted by the UN virtually every year since. In 1988

2.3 million refugees, almost half the Palestinian population, were registered with the UN. Jerusalem was to be placed under an international administration. During 1948 Israel occupied half of Jerusalem, in 1967 took it all and in 1980 declared a united Jerusalem to be the capital and official seat of the Israeli head of state.

Resolution 242 was passed in 1967. Rejected by the PLO for recognising the Israeli state and treating Palestine as a refugee problem, it calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. General Assembly resolution 3236 (1974) reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination and national independence. It has been reaffirmed by the Assembly every year since. Such statements are mere scraps of paper to the US and Britain to be torn up at will. Under Reagan the US used its Security Council veto 18 times to protect Israel, usually with British support. The Bush administration has used it four times so far.

#### KOREA

Full scale fighting between the Korean People's Army and the US-backed Republic of Korea's (ROK) forces broke out on 25 June 1950. On 27 June US troops were ordered by President Truman to give ROK forces 'cover and support'. Later that day the US proposed to the Security Council that UN assistance be given to the ROK. The UN, presented with a *fait accompli*, rubber stamped it in the absence of the Soviet Union, which had been manipulated by the US into not attending the Security Council on that day. Three days later Truman authorised the bombing of North Korea, a naval blockade and combat use of US troops. The British Labour and French governments proposed a resolution establishing a 'UN Command'. Under US General Douglas MacArthur it had no need to report back to the UN. Britain then helped draft a resolution giving MacArthur UN authority to cross the improvised border, the 38th Parallel. This US and British troops did 12 hours before the resolution was passed.

The British Labour left accepted a UN 'police action' in Korea, but at the Party Conference in October 1950 proposed a resolution expressing 'alarm at increasing danger of war' and for better relations with the Soviet Union. Its supporters said it did nothing to offend the government or the Party leadership. However, it clearly did and was defeated by 4,681,000 votes to 881,000. The Labour government agreed, under US guidance, to increase the military budget to 14 per cent of the national product.

Four million Koreans were killed in the war, 405,000 US troops and 793 British troops with 2,878 missing and wounded.

#### VIETNAM

UN Secretary General U Thant attempted to arrange peace talks between the US and Vietnam in 1964. The US rejected such talks saying that they might undermine the South Vietnam government. By 1964 the UN General Assembly had many more members, the newly independent former colonies, and they were likely to embarrass the US in any debate.

#### NAMIBIA

SWAPO presented a petition requesting free general elections in Namibia in 1962. In 1969 the General Assembly declared all acts by the South African government concerning Namibia to be illegal. The 1976 Security Council demanded free elections. Thirteen years later they were held after Namibian patriots with their ANC and Cuban comrades had defeated the South African army in battle in Angola. South Africa was spared rigorous sanctions: Namibia is rich in copper, uranium and diamonds.

#### POLISARIO

24 years since the UN General Assembly recognised the inalienable right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination and independence their land is still occupied by Moroccan soldiers. Hawker Siddley and Vickers have recently signed weapons contracts with the Moroccan government. The Western Sahara is rich in phosphates.

#### ZIMBABWE

The Smith government declared UDI in 1965. The British Labour government refused to send troops to dislodge it. A complete UN blockade was declared. The Royal Navy imposed the Beira patrol off the Mozambican coast. Regardless, Shell and BP systematically organised illegal oil supplies to 'Rhodesia' with the assistance of the British Ministry of Power. A report by a Tory MP showed that 11 countries broke sanctions in 1967: the main offender was Israel.

#### CYPRUS

Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974, taking 37 per cent of the land and driving 40 per cent of Cypriots of Greek origin from their homes. Turkish Cypriots had been an oppressed section of the population. UN Resolution 3212 called for respect for the territorial integrity of Cyprus and the withdrawal of foreign forces. It was endorsed by Security Council Resolution 361 and supported in the General Assembly vote by Turkey! Such resolutions have been repeated regularly since with Turkey still occupying and partitioning the island. The invasion was sanctioned by the US Secretary of State Kissinger to keep Greece and Turkey in NATO and allies of imperialism in the eastern Mediterranean.

In the 45 years of its existence, the UN has done nothing to prevent constant Zionist expansionism. It was powerless to prevent the slaughter of four million Vietnamese and US use of chemical weapons. The US proxy war on Central America now claims a quarter of a million lives. Iraq received no sanctions for its use of chemical weapons on Kurdish people. With no powerful sponsors the Tamils have no voice in the UN as their massacre continues. US invasions of Grenada and Panama went untroubled as the US vetoed resolutions. The UN inevitably reflects the global balance of forces between imperialism and socialism, oppressor and oppressed nations. Lenin's remarks on the League of Nations are as relevant to the UN today as they were in 1920: 'Without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international arbitration courts, no talk about a reduction of armaments, no "democratic" reorganisations of the League of Nations will save mankind from new imperialist wars'. (The Terms of Admission to the Communist International.) ■



# RCG

**FIGHT RACISM!  
FIGHT IMPERIALISM!**

# STOP

# GULF WAR



**BRITISH HANDS OFF  
THE MIDDLE EAST!**

NICK BARTOLONE



THE RCG ON THE MARCH - GETTING THE CORRECT MESSAGE ACROSS

## TRAPPED BY LABOUR IMPERIALISM: BRITISH 'SOCIALISM'— IRAQ AND THE GULF CRISIS

**On 20 October 100,000 people across the United States marched to protest against the US government's preparations for war in the Gulf. It was a significant beginning to a potentially mass anti-imperialist, anti-war movement. In contrast, the British movement has been a pathetic spectacle of sectarian division and opportunist surrender to the Labour Party.**

(a pro-Zionist organisation inside the Labour Party: we 'can't condemn the actions of the Israeli police without mentioning the provocative stone-throwing of the Palestinian mobs', said one of their speakers at the 4

November CAWG conference) and Socialist Outlook, the CAWG is a sham left cover for the Labour Party imperialists. It is thoroughly undemocratic and sectarian.

Its November Conference was a

talking shop designed to sabotage and prevent any serious anti-imperialist action. An attempt by Workers Power and supporters of the **Ad Hoc Hands Off the Middle East Committee (HOME)** to force the conference to take united action was suppressed by the most outrageous methods. The organisers simply refused to take votes and then refused to take points of order! An RCG member was called up to speak, and then on the whim of the chair had this right withdrawn.

In opposition to these shams, the RCG is working in the HOME committee to build a movement capable of leading a serious campaign against the war parties - both Tory and Labour. The HOME committee actively campaigns on the demands: **Hands Off the Middle East! and Imperialist Forces Out of the Gulf!** As well as the RCG, other affiliates are the Revolutionary Communist Party, the Workers International League, the Revolutionary International League, the Anarchist Workers Group, Workers Power and a number of other organisations.

HOME has organised successful events including a major demonstration on 8 September, a torchlit demonstration and rally on 10 October and a picket of Downing Street on 14 November. It has sent speakers to various meetings, and has produced leaflets, petitions and badges for use by all organisations and individuals. On 24 November it will be organising an anti-imperialist contingent on the CND demonstration.

On all anti-war activities the RCG raises two additional slogans: **Self-determination for Kurdistan!** and **Victory to the Palestinian Revolution!** These demands are an indispensable basis for building real unity with anti-imperialist forces fighting in the Middle East and the Middle East community organising in Britain. Such unity could become a focus for drawing the oppressed workers in Britain into organised political struggle and forming solid foundations for an effective anti-war movement.

Eddie Abrahams & Jenny Sutton

### SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY OPPORTUNISM

In its newspaper, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) argues that '... no things now stand, the correct starting point for all our agitation and propaganda is "US-UK out of the Gulf".' In practice it has abandoned this position in favour of an alliance with the imperialist Labour left. The SWP refused to join the anti-imperialist **Ad Hoc Hands of the Middle East Committee (HOME)** and has boycotted all its actions.

Instead, believing it will bring them closer to the core of the working class movement, they have chosen to work with the pro-imperialist Bennite/CND/Green Campaign to Stop the War in the Gulf (CSWG). SWP speakers have been touring the country sharing platforms with the Labour left, CND and Green Party all of whom support UN sanctions and/or UN action against Iraq.

The SWP's opportunist practice is complemented by an equally opportunist 'theory'. In *Socialist Worker* John Molyneux writes:

**'We support, as revolutionary Marxists have always done, the victims of imperialism against their imperialist oppressors ... (however) siding with Iraq in its conflict with imperialism does not involve the slightest political support to the Saddam regime or to any of its particular policies and actions. (In the same way we can side with the IRA against British imperialism while opposing its terrorist strategy and many of its actions.)'**

If the SWP sides with Iraq, why then is it building an alliance with the Labour left, CND and the Greens who all oppose Iraq? The fact is that the SWP actually sides neither with Iraq nor with the IRA.

The SWP equates the IRA and the Saddam Hussein regime, which in their own words is 'horrific and reactionary'. What a disgrace! How is this siding with the IRA? Bracketing the Irish national liberation movement with Saddam Hussein, butcher of the Kurdish liberation struggle, nevertheless has a purpose. It is the SWP's appeal to be allowed into the embrace of the British labour movement's chauvinist, pacifist brand of 'anti-imperialism'.

For the record, the SWP has never sided with the IRA. They supported British troops going into Ireland in 1969 and ever since never missed an opportunity to attack the IRA. The following is an example of how the SWP 'sides with the IRA':

**'While the IRA have bombed factories in Northern Ireland as part of their struggle, as part of ours we campaign for workers to take over those factories - a completely different approach.'**

**A completely different approach indeed. One in which you support anti-imperialism in words, but in deeds suck up to the Labour imperialists!**

The need to combat Labour imperialism and overcome the left's failure to act will be the theme of two **day-schools** the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) is organising in December in London and in Manchester. Under the title **Crisis in the Gulf: Oil Imperialism and the Class Struggle**, we will provide the opportunity for a wide ranging discussion of the issues thrown up by the Gulf crisis and the response needed from communists and anti-imperialists.

The British left's response to the Gulf crisis is determined by its subservience to the Labour Party. At the September Labour Party conference the left suffered a crushing defeat. By a massive 7-1 margin a rather feeble and mealy-mouthed resolution from the left was buried beneath a show of chauvinist Labour imperialist hands. Tony Benn was refused the right even to speak in the debate. The left confronted a stark choice: begin to build a serious anti-war movement, or act as a left cover for imperialist Labour. Most chose the latter option.

A **Committee to Stop War in the Gulf (CSWG)** is one product of the Labour left's efforts. This body, led by Tony Benn, is an alliance of the Labour left, the CND, the Green Party and indeed the SWP. In the interests of 'building the broadest possible alliance' (with the pro-imperialist mainstream of the Labour Party), the CSWG not only refuses to demand the withdrawal of British military forces from the Gulf, but actively campaigns for UN sanctions against Iraq. Expressing the interests of the pacifist middle class, the CSWG leadership wishes to subjugate Iraq quietly and peacefully. They do not want a bloody war which would have serious consequences for their own imperialist nation.

Running parallel with the CSWG is the **Campaign Against War in the Gulf (CAWG)**. In words they are committed to the demand for the withdrawal of imperialist forces from the Gulf. But preferring unity with Benn and the Labour Party rather than anti-imperialist forces, they refuse in practice to raise this slogan.

Dominated by Socialist Organiser

# THE PREP

A US administration official declared that 'any withdrawal that left the Iraqi war machine intact would be unacceptable.' Thatcher chipped in to assert that Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait was not enough. It was also necessary to destroy Iraq's capacity for chemical and nuclear warfare.

Imperialist intervention in the Gulf has only one aim: to control oil and crush any challenge from the Arab masses. It is there to defend imperialist privilege and luxury. The US Secretary of State James Baker was unambiguous. Defending the US military mobilisation on 13 November he said:

**'The economic lifeline of the industrial (ie imperialist) world runs from the Gulf. If you want to sum it up in one word it is jobs (for the boys and the labour aristocracy of the imperialist world).'**

US imperialism and its allies now have almost 500,000 soldiers in the Gulf. In November, 100,000 more US troops prepared to join the 240,000 already there. In anticipation of even greater deployments, the Pentagon began calling up reservists and extended duty from 180 to 360 days. Supporting these forces are nearly 60,000 troops from the imperialist countries and reactionary Arab regimes, including a 10,000-strong British contingent. So far over half a million tons of war material has been landed in Saudi Arabia with more expected.

### PROBLEMS OF WAR

Whilst imperialism's military preparations continue, it is confronting growing political obstacles to actually waging a war. Confidence in a rapid military victory over Iraq has evaporated. With the failure of UN sanctions to break the Iraqi regime, the imperialists are being forced to consider soberly the enormous domestic and international consequences of war.

It is becoming increasingly evident that President Bush does not have overwhelming domestic support to conduct a full scale war. As the British *Economist* commented, 'Peace groups are sprouting. The clergy are growing more vocal. More and more people are complaining that the Gulf deployment is just for the benefit of the oil companies.' US statistics indicate that in the first 12 days of war, 10,000 US soldiers would be killed and 30,000 wounded. Such casualties could generate an anti-war mobilisation sufficiently powerful to undermine the US ruling class's cohesion.

Ominously for Bush, the most decorated US soldier in Vietnam, Col David Hackworth denounced the US intervention and hinted at the serious class and racial contradictions which would undermine even the US military machine. He said that while President Bush had 'drawn the line in the sand: he will not be out there defending it - it's blacks, Hispanics, poor whites, the same ones that fought in Vietnam.'

Already, in contrast to the US's white population, the majority of black and Hispanic people oppose the US war drive. Forming a disproportionate percentage of US army casualties, they could pose a serious revolutionary challenge to imperialism in the heart of the US.

Within the Arab world, imperialism confronts even greater dangers.



# GULF — IMPERIALISM PREPARES AN OFFENSIVE

Rebuffing all proposals for a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis, the US Administration, aided by an even more bellicose British government, is continuing its intensive military build-up in the Gulf. With the reactionary character of the Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian regimes exposed, the imperialists have abandoned talk of defending 'democracy', and 'self-determination' and are engaged, instead, in an unconcealed exercise in colonial subjugation. They want to destroy Iraq as a regional military power. **EDDIE ABRAHAMS** analyses the current stage of the crisis.

The mass of the Arab population, even in countries whose governments support the imperialist venture, is thoroughly anti-imperialist. In both Egypt and Syria, governments have taken repressive measures to quell outbursts of pro-Iraqi demonstrations. In the event of a war, in which Arab casualties are likely to exceed those of the imperialists, a massive popular upheaval throughout the Arab world is almost inevitable. This could destroy the network of reactionary Arab regimes that imperialism uses, along with Israel, to control the region.

An all-out war will also severely damage the world economy as Gulf oilfields are put out of operation and oil prices rocket even further. All these considerations have created important divisions within the US and British ruling classes about the wisdom of war and have also en-

## IN FOR A KILLING

Royal Dutch Shell's profits for July-September were \$2.13 billion compared with \$1.28 billion for the same months a year ago. Shell was the most profitable company in the world last year with \$6.48 billion. The chairman of BP said that every \$1 increase in price for a barrel of oil adds over \$200 million to his company's profits. By late September oil prices had doubled on their 2 August level to \$40 a barrel. Since then they have swung between \$30-\$40 as a tidal wave of speculative money has flooded through the London Petroleum Exchange and New York Mercantile Exchange. If prices remain at their current levels the eight major oil transnationals will add an additional \$20 billion plus to their combined 1989 profits of \$21.35 billion.

Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd announced that it was 'essential to build up the military option and to show that it's not a bluff'. Tom King, Defence Secretary, preparing to send more British forces to the Gulf, declared: 'We are not bluffing. If he does not get out of Kuwait, he faces the certainty of force.'

British imperialism's 'no negotiation', 'Saddam Hussein must unconditionally surrender or be fought' position has been fully endorsed by the Labour Party. Displaying its subservience to imperialism and hoping to harvest the chauvinist vote in the next election, the Labour Party has been outflanked on the left by Tory Heath. Heath has urged negotiations and warned against the 'madness of war'; the Labour Party has loudly endorsed war preparations. When James Baker visited Europe to firm-up a fractured imperialist alliance

forces shot dead 21 Palestinians and wounded 300 more on the Temple Mount religious site. All the UN managed to do was mildly condemn the action and vote for a delegation to go and investigate the massacres. So confident is the Israeli government that imperialism will take no serious measures against it — such as halting financial and military aid — that it has refused to allow the UN delegation permission to investigate the Temple Mount murders. Instead it has produced its own report blaming the Palestinians! Meanwhile the killing, the repression, the torture, the blowing up of family homes, the sieges and curfews continue unabated with finance and arms supplied by the US to the tune of \$4bn a year.

Imperialist support for Zionism and for the reactionary Turkish, Saudi Arabian and Egyptian regimes is but the other side of the coin to its aggression against Iraq. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait disrupted the system of alliances incorporating Zionism and the reactionary Arab regimes which act as the mechanism for securing imperialist control over the Middle East. Iraq therefore has to be destroyed.

The reactionary consequences of imperialist war mobilisation extend beyond the Middle East. Fidel Castro aptly noted that: 'For every American soldier killed in the Gulf battlefields, 1,000 people in the Third World will starve.' The massive increase in oil prices since August has already devastated Third World economies. If war breaks out and prices shoot up even higher, many Third World economies will just collapse.

If oil prices remain around \$40 per barrel, the world's poorest countries will face a \$32bn rise in oil bills. Consumption in sub-Saharan Africa will drop by 30 per cent, leading to the closure of mines, factories and transport systems. Hunger, poverty and death will multiply. Eastern European states will have to pay \$12bn more for their oil. The working class, already being devastated as a result of the 1989 counter-revolution, will suffer more.

Those who will gain from this imperialist aggression are the imperialist ruling classes themselves, their multi-nationals, their agents in the oppressed nations and their lackeys in the working class movements. Oil-exporting countries taken together will make an extra \$260bn while armament companies will boost their profits as the trade in killing machines grows.

The British and US political and military apparatus is engaged in a major disinformation campaign to conceal its real military intentions. We must prepare for all eventualities. We must demand not only the withdrawal of all imperialist forces from the Gulf, but the immediate lifting of all sanctions against the Iraqi people.

We have said before, and we repeat, the British working class has nothing to gain from supporting any imperialist war, in the Gulf, in Ireland or anywhere else. Our only interest can be to unite with the masses in the Arab world. If war breaks out they will be killed in their hundreds of thousands in order that, in the imperialist states, the privileged can have access to secure and cheap oil. We must make sure in such a horrendous event that we succeed in building a movement to halt and destroy the deadly imperialist war machine.

## Hospitals transformed into mortuaries

British naval hospitals in Plymouth and Portsmouth have turned medical wards into mortuaries capable of dealing with 100 bodies each day. Royal Navy officers believe that war is absolutely inevitable. A survivor from the Malvinas/Falklands war when HMS Sheffield was sunk by an exocet said: 'This will be the first time the British public has had to deal with the sight of body bags in any numbers.' In comparison, he said, the Malvinas/Falklands 'was a gentleman's war'.

## Kuwait is profitable for imperialism

The Kuwaiti ruling class is hated by the Arab masses because it invests billions in the imperialist countries while leaving the Arab world in a state of extreme poverty. The Kuwaiti ruling class has some \$150bn invested in imperialist nations. The *Washington Post* claims that Kuwait has some \$40-50bn worth of assets in the US. It is also one of the biggest foreign investors in Spain and Japan. Examples of its shareholdings are: in Germany — 14 per cent of Daimler, 20 per cent of Metallgesellschaft and 20 per cent of Hoechst; in Britain — 10.2 per cent of Midland Bank and 14 per cent of BP.

## Yemeni workers

The Saudi Arabian government has decided to expel 1.5 million Yemeni workers from the kingdom. The Yemenis have lived and worked in Saudi Arabia for decades and form the largest group of foreign workers. In Yemen many will fall into appalling poverty and unemployment. The reason for this brutal action is the Yemeni government's refusal to support US military intervention in the Gulf. Saudi motives go beyond retaliation. They fear that if war breaks out, 1.5 million Yemeni workers within the kingdom could provide a powerful and explosive force for anti-imperialist insurrection.

## Women in Saudi Arabia

The reaction and backwardness the US is defending in Saudi Arabia was highlighted on 6 November when 49 women drove a convoy through the capital Riyadh. They were protesting against a law prohibiting women from driving. All 49 — professionals — were suspended from their jobs. A religious edict denouncing the women was accepted as official government policy.

## Serving imperialism

The counter-revolution in eastern Europe is engaged in a pathetic attempt to ingratiate itself with the US imperialists. In the hope of receiving a little extra aid to alleviate their traumatic economic crises, the fledgling bourgeois governments in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland have offered to send assistance to the imperialist invasion force in the Gulf. The imperialists, while politely accepting the offers, have kept their money for other purposes.

## Imperialist gratitude

In gratitude for President Assad's collaboration and the Syrian troop contingent sent to fight against Iraq, the imperialists gave Assad a free hand to deal with his longstanding Lebanese adversary General Aoun. Confident that neither imperialism nor Zionism would seek to restrain his forces, he ordered Syrian troops to move in to crush Aoun's power. Aoun took refuge in the French embassy. With Syrian control in Lebanon strengthened, Assad has moved to clear Beirut of Muslim and Christian militias as a prelude to restoring some semblance of national government. Rumours are proliferating that he is also preparing a major attack on the substantial Palestinian resistance organisation in Lebanon.

## Israeli fascist killed

On 5 November Rabbi Meir Kahane was killed by an Arab nationalist while on a visit to New York. Kahane, founder of the fascist Kach party, was a virulent racist who advocated the forcible expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland and praised those who murdered them. So virulent was his party's racism that for reasons of international public relations, the Israeli government felt compelled to ban Kach from contesting the 1988 elections. Within hours of news of Kahane's killing two elderly Palestinians were gunned down in Jerusalem.



A PALESTINIAN IS RUSHED TO HOSPITAL AFTER THE MASSACRE AT TEMPLE MOUNT

couraged the European and Japanese imperialists to assert their own independent stand.

## STRUGGLE AMONGST THE BANDITS

Japan and Europe, through the issues of hostages, aid and 'peace initiatives', are distancing themselves from the US stand. Depending more on Gulf oil than the US, they are less eager for a war which would seriously disrupt the flow of this oil. Adopting a less bellicose posture, the French, German and Japanese ruling classes are also sounding out the possibilities of a new post-crisis Gulf order in which their interests will be served by their current 'moderate stand'.

Japan has committed \$2bn in aid for Arab regimes suffering as a result of sanctions against Iraq. It has offered Egypt a \$400m loan at one per cent interest. Germany too has offered aid and even sent medicine to Iraq! Senior German, French and Japanese politicians, with the full backing of their governments, have visited Baghdad not just to release hostages

but to explore the possibility of a settlement without war. The only one not to receive such backing was Tory ex-Prime Minister Edward Heath who visited Baghdad and returned to popular, but not governmental, acclaim with 33 freed hostages.

Germany and Japan are also using the Gulf crisis as a first step in preparing for a much longer term challenge to the US's worldwide military superiority. They have begun the process of flexing their military muscle to reflect their economic strength. German Chancellor Kohl has declared his intention to change the German constitution and allow German troops to take part in UN 'peace keeping operations' overseas. The Japanese government has, similarly, tabled a bill to set up a 'United Nations Peace Co-operation Force' enabling Japanese forces to do the same.

The Thatcher government, hanging onto the coat-tails of US imperialism, stands out in Europe as the only one fully committed to war. Mrs Thatcher has warned Saddam Hussein that 'his time is running out'.

and get support for the use of force, he was welcomed by Gerald Kaufman, the Shadow Foreign Secretary. Simultaneously, the Labour Party disassociated itself from Tony Benn's visit to Baghdad in search of a peaceful solution.

## IMPERIALIST WAR DRIVE STRENGTHENS REGIONAL REACTION

The longer the Gulf crisis persists, the more fully is imperialist reaction exposed. In October, Amnesty International produced reports on Saudi Arabia and Egypt, two of imperialism's firmest allies, condemning their violations of human rights and torture of thousands of imprisoned political opponents, including hundreds of communists and anti-imperialists. Under the cloak of the imperialist presence in the region, the Turkish government announced that it is to go ahead with the execution of 200 revolutionaries languishing in Turkish prisons.

In Palestine, the Zionists have acquired additional confidence to continue genocide. On 8 October Israeli



It is perhaps the unfortunate fate of black revolutionaries from South Africa that their eventual biographers are white and tend to be liberal: Donald Woods on Steve Biko; Mary Benson on Nelson Mandela; and now Benjamin Pogrund on Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, founding President of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC). This says a lot about the role that white liberals played during the decades when the apartheid regime attempted to bury the voices of black revolutionaries.

Pogrund's book must be approached with caution. Donald Woods managed to obscure Biko's politics with his own, and to some degree Pogrund cannot avoid doing the same; not because his purpose is mischievous, but because, ultimately, he is an observer of only part of Sobukwe's life and a participant in even less, wholly dictated by apartheid. He is a white observer of a fundamentally black experience. At key moments he blunders. Nevertheless it is a brave book and a pleasure to read when so little is written about one of Africa's foremost revolutionaries.

#### YOUTH LEAGUE

Pogrund first met Sobukwe in 1957 when Sobukwe was working as a 'language assistant' at Witwatersrand University. This was one of apartheid's refinements – Sobukwe was a very talented linguist but could not be appointed a lecturer because he was black. By 1957 there was already much political water under the bridge, and Sobukwe's political standpoint was already formed as a member of the ANC Youth League (CYL).

Sobukwe had become politically active first as a young student at Fort Hare College where a branch of the CYL was formed in 1948, the year that the Nationalist Party came to power. The CYL was deeply critical of the ANC old-guard leadership both because of its record of collaboration with the regime (through the stooge body the Natives' Representative Council) and its failure to organise the struggle for liberation. The new generation, amongst them Mandela, Tambo, Sisulu, Lembede, Mda, developed an Africanist programme for the CYL, its fundamental aims being: '1) the creation of a united nation out of the heterogeneous tribes; 2) the freeing of Africans from foreign domination and foreign leadership; 3) the creation of conditions which can enable Africa to make her own contribution to human progress and happiness.' (CYL Policy Document)

The CYL proclaimed that the national liberation movement must be led by Africans, and even though some white people might condemn racial oppression: 'in the last analysis this counts for nothing. In the struggle for freedom Africans will be wasting their time and deflecting their forces if they look up to the Europeans, either for inspiration or for help in their political struggle.' Further:

'It is known... that a dominant group does not voluntarily give up its privileged position. That is why the Congress Youth puts forward African Nationalism as the militant outlook of an oppressed people seeking a solid basis for waging a long, bitter and unrelenting struggle for its national freedom.'

These principles remained at the centre of Sobukwe's politics for the rest of his life. In 1949 the CYL took over the leadership of the ANC and its Programme of Action was adopted at the Bloemfontein Congress. Sobukwe was elected National Secretary of the CYL. The reader will, however, look in vain for some of this detail in Pogrund's book, although the two central issues of non-collaboration and the role of communists in the liberation struggle are constant themes.

#### POLITICAL DIVISIONS

By the time Pogrund comes on the scene, the early 1950s had seen the enactment of major apartheid legislation like the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and the Suppression of Communism Act (1950).

CAROL BRICKLEY reviews BENJAMIN POGRUND's recent biography of 'How can man die better... Sobukwe and apartheid', documenting the life of ROBERT MANGALISO SOBUKWE, the Founding President of the PAC

# SOBUKWE AFRICAN REVOLUTIONARY

The Africanists, as Sobukwe and the group around him called themselves, were deeply suspicious of the role of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) which had dissolved itself shortly before it was banned (it was reformed three years later underground as the SACP). The Africanists suspected the CPSA of attempting to manipulate the liberation movement behind the scenes and sacrificing the liberation struggle in order to make an alliance with the white working class, with African workers not as the leadership of the struggle but as one part of an alliance. Sobukwe's group was striving towards a national liberation struggle of African people led by African people. It was this conflict of aims which then (as now) led the PAC's more scurrilous critics to describe the PAC as racist. It is a less than honest criticism, and one which Pogrund's book completely refutes: neither in his personal nor political life was Sobukwe a proponent of 'anti-white racism'.

The conflict with the South African communists was however very real. Developments in the ANC during the 1950s confirmed the Africanists' suspicions. Repression forged an alliance between the ANC and other groups, as the 'Asians' and 'Coloured' peoples were caught in apartheid's net. This co-operation was not opposed by Africanists – on the contrary, on the basis of a strong African-led liberation movement, they favoured co-operation with all oppressed groups. They felt however that what was happening was not co-operation but dissolution. In 1952 the white Congress of Democrats was formed and Pogrund suggests that it was widely regarded as a front for the disbanded CPSA.

Distrust was sharpened when the ANC in alliance with the SAIC, ACPO and COD<sup>2</sup> called for a 'Congress of the People'. The Congress, held in June 1955, gave birth to the Freedom Charter, which was ratified as the ANC's programme a year later. The Africanists felt that the 1949 Programme of Action, based on Africanist principles of national self-determination, had been abandoned in favour of an alliance against the injustices of apartheid.

The debate within the movement sharpened and the Africanists, with Sobukwe and Mthopeng in the lead, began to organise open opposition. The ANC was having difficulties: as a result of the Defiance Campaign the leadership faced the long Treason Trial and many had to operate underground. This in turn heightened the suspicion that the leadership was not accountable and was being manipulated from behind the scenes.

#### THE FORMATION OF THE PAC

At the end of 1958, Pogrund, by now a journalist for *The Rand Daily Mail*, was present at the key Transvaal regional ANC conference where the Africanists were expelled. Pogrund reports Sobukwe's view that the breach was inevitable: as a result the PAC was formed. At its founding conference in April 1959, Sobukwe expounded the PAC's three main aims:

'We aim, politically, at government of the Africans by the Africans for the Africans, with everybody who owes his only loyalty to Afrika and who is



Sobukwe at Orlando police station after the Sharpeville massacre

prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as African. We guarantee no minority rights, because we think in terms of individuals not groups.

'Economically we aim at the rapid extension of industrial development in order to alleviate pressure on the land, which is what progress means in terms of modern society. We stand committed to a policy guaranteeing the most equitable distribution of wealth.

'Socially we aim at the full development of the human personality and a ruthless uprooting and outlawing of all forms or manifestations of the racial myth. To sum it up we stand for an Africanist Socialist Democracy.'<sup>3</sup>

The inaugural address was a very concise statement of Sobukwe's politics. It contains intriguing sentences: 'In conclusion I wish to state that the Africanists do not at all subscribe to the fashionable doctrine of South African exceptionalism...'. Surely a comment on the SACP's new doctrine of the time 'colonialism of a special kind' which made South Africa out to be an exception in Africa where the white working class would struggle alongside the oppressed black majority.

Pogrund misses the fine details but his account of the Founding Conference is very interesting. In a question and answer session, Sobukwe replied to a question about whether he was a communist or socialist: '... we borrow from East and West – political democracy from the West and planned economy from the East. And this planned economy has no meaning unless it means finally, equality.'

#### SHARPEVILLE

In the first year of its existence, the PAC began organising and building its membership throughout the country. Here Pogrund is at his best, with direct experience of what was happening, honestly trying to assess the impact of the newly formed organisation. The PAC launched a Status Campaign aimed at developing the consciousness of black people.

Alongside this, in August 1959 it was agreed to launch an anti-pass defiance campaign. The ANC had called a campaign on pass laws for June 1959, but Pogrund records that little happened. The two organisations were now vying for support, and when the ANC declared that 31 March 1960 would be 'Anti-Pass Day' when 'deputations would call upon local authorities and government officials in charge of black affairs throughout the country to urge abolition', Sobukwe determined that the ANC's rather timid aims would not be allowed to interfere with the PAC's defiance.

21 March 1960 was chosen as the day when black people would leave their passes at home and present themselves at police stations for arrest, under the slogans 'No Bail! No Defence! No Fine!' Sobukwe was determined that PAC leaders would be at the head of marches. The decision had bitter consequences for his political future.

The events of 21 March at Sharpeville are well known – the police opened fire on a peaceful demonstration. 69 people were murdered, most of them shot in the back. Sharpeville reverberated throughout South Africa and beyond. A state of emergency was declared, millions of Rand were wiped off the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, and the regime unleashed the most bloody repression. Both the PAC and the ANC were banned and thousands were tortured, detained and imprisoned. As a result, first the PAC and then the ANC launched the armed struggle in response to the regime's terror.

Sobukwe, who had presented himself at the head of march to Orlando police station, was arrested and sentenced to three years imprisonment. Pogrund presents a vivid account of this period and its consequences. He also admits that for some time after Sharpeville he failed to contact Sobukwe: he re-established contact 18 months later when Sobukwe was in Pretoria Local prison. From this time on, Pogrund remained in touch with Sobukwe as a prisoner, looking after his and his family's needs.

#### THE SOBUKWE CLAUSE

For the next three years no one had any doubt that Sobukwe would resume leadership of the PAC on his release in 1963. He had been sentenced for incitement to break the law, not the more serious charges which followed the banning of the liberation movements and the launch of the armed struggle. But the regime had other plans.

Before Sobukwe's release date, a special law was enacted allowing prisoners convicted under security laws to be detained indefinitely after their sentence had been served. It was never used against any other prisoner and became known as the Sobukwe Clause.

It was the cruellest possible outcome.

Sobukwe was kept in a separate compound – effectively in solitary confinement – on Robben Island for the next six years. Each year the provisions of the Sobukwe Clause were extended for a further year. Although the physical conditions of his imprisonment were much better than for the other Robben Island prisoners, isolation was a harsh regime, well documented in Pogrund's book. In 1969, fearful of Sobukwe's mental health, the regime suddenly released him, at the same time banning him for five years to Kimberley.

#### POGRUND THE LIBERAL

Over the period of detention and banning, Pogrund had remained a faithful supporter of both Sobukwe and his family. He fulfilled the role that only a white liberal could – Sobukwe could have no open contact with his comrades – he looked after Sobukwe's financial, physical and educational needs admirably. They also discussed philosophy, religion, literature etc, etc at great length. We are given, in this later part of the book, great detail about his physical needs, even down to the changing size of his trousers and his preference for conservative clothes.

But it is also here that Pogrund sets about imposing his own political preferences – Sobukwe as African saint, the political edges knocked off. It is the greatest pity that information on Sobukwe's contacts with his PAC comrades and Steve Biko is omitted – for indeed he did have contact. Pogrund cannot supply us with the detail and it is sorely missed.

Sobukwe became seriously ill in 1977 and until his death in February 1978 the regime continued its cruel treatment, making his treatment for cancer as difficult as possible.

But what a funeral! The black youth were robbed of the live Sobukwe – the regime had ensured that – so they came to reclaim his body and his political legacy in death. Expecting a 'dignified' African funeral at which he and Helen Suzman were invited to speak, Pogrund was horrified: 'The Children have taken over.' For two weeks students kept a vigil in the location. On the day of the funeral, as Zwelakhe Sisulu reported in *The Nation*, black youth poured into the small town of Graff Reinet, Sobukwe's birthplace. 'As the spearhead of the procession entered the arena, Buthelezi was spotted by the youths: "they broke into a song: When I see Mantazima, I see a stooge, when I see Mangope I see a puppet, when I see Gatsha, I see... (a derogatory word)." A young barefoot boy approached Buthelezi "and extended his hand: Here take this, he said as he handed over a two-cent piece, which was flung away." The crowd forced Buthelezi to leave the stadium, along with other collaborators.

At this point the liberal Pogrund parts company with the legacy of the revolutionary Sobukwe; he could not bear to remain for the burial.

The youth who had risen up in Soweto had reclaimed Sobukwe. The fires which were lit in 1976 continued to burn for the next decade, and are still burning in the townships of Azania, unquenchable.

1. In his forthcoming book, *A Pan Africanist Speaks* (Skotaville), Zolile Keke cites the CPSA central committee report in January 1950 as a cause of suspicion by the Africanists: 'The national organisations, to be effective, must be transformed into a revolutionary party of workers, peasants and intellectuals and petty bourgeoisie, linked together in a firm organisation... and guided by a definite programme of struggle against all forms of racial discrimination in alliance with the class conscious European [white South African] workers and intellectuals. Such a party would be distinguished from the Communist Party in that its objective is national liberation, that is, the abolition of race discrimination, but it would co-operate closely with the Communist Party. In this party the class conscious workers and peasants of the national group concerned would constitute the main leadership. It would be their task to develop an adequate organisational apparatus to conduct mass struggles against race discrimination, to combat racism and chauvinism in the people, and to forge unity in action between the oppressed people and between them and the European working class.'

2. These were the South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Organisation and the Congress of Democrats.

3. Quoted from *A Pan Africanist Speaks*, forthcoming, as above.

*How can man die better... Sobukwe and Apartheid*. Benjamin Pogrund, published by Peter Halban Publishers Ltd, 1990, 406pp, £14.95



# Zephania Mothopeng

September 1913 - 23 October 1990  
President of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania

BY BENNIE BUNSEE AND HAMILTON ZOLILE KEKE



Zephania Mothopeng

Tambo, Lembede, Mda, Sisulu, Sobukwe, and more.

Zeph continued his defiance as a student teacher at Adam's College in Natal. But it was when he went to teach at Orlando High School (where he also distinguished himself as a singer and leader of the school choir) that his political career began to take shape. Here he met the father of revolutionary African nationalism, Dr. Albert Luthuli, and became a member of the ANC Youth League.

It was in this political milieu that Zeph learned the theoretical basis of Pan Africanism and of a United Africa that promised to be the ultimate guarantor of the freedom of the African people throughout the continent and elsewhere in the world where they were scattered in the wake of the slave trade.

While these revolutionary Pan

African youth to rise up against the resident British Commissioner. He was a student leader at Adam's College in Natal, and a member of the ANC Youth League.

ever the activist, was involved in the African Teachers Association as its President. The struggle in education would always be his political forte. The campaign against low wages and segregated education was supported by the ANC, the Youth League and the All African Convention. Eventually the government was forced to back down.

against the pass laws and the Sharpeville massacre. Out of this POQO emerged to begin the armed struggle. Zeph was in the thick of all this. He was arrested during the Sharpeville events and sentenced to two years imprisonment.

After his release in 1962 he began again building the PAC underground. He was arrested

pointed President of the PAC in 1988 he was released, seriously ill, by a regime which was too scared to take responsibility for his death in prison.

He immediately started work for the PAC again by forming the Pan Africanist Movement which became PAC International when the PAC was unbanned in February 1990. It was during this crucial period that Zeph very firmly opposed negotiations with the regime in the present conditions. His freedom and the freedom of his country were not negotiable questions.

His death is a great loss to the country and to Africa. The leaders of the liberation movements including Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, sent messages to his funeral acknowledging the loss of a great revolutionary. But he leaves behind him a rich revolutionary legacy.

Viva Cde President Zephania Mothopeng. ■

On Saturday 1 November, more than 250 people attended a memorial meeting in London for Cde Zephania Mothopeng. The meeting was organised by the PAC in London and chaired by Kuselo Mngaza. Speakers included Cde Mngaza, PAC Chief Representative; Cde Masemola, African National Congress; Cde Molefe Pheto, Black Consciousness Movement of Azania; Carol Brickley, City of London Anti-Apartheid Group; David Reed, Revolutionary Communist Group; Mrenga Bambata, All African Peoples Revolutionary Party; Marc Wadsworth, Labour Party Black Sections; Stella Moabi, PAC Women's Section; Scrape Ntshona, a teaching colleague of Uncle Zeph, and Zolile Keke, who had been in prison with him, both praised his life as a great revolutionary. The meeting included poems and songs by PAC comrades.



Zephania Mothopeng, or Uncle Zeph as he was known because of the great respect he inspired in the liberation ranks, was a towering figure in the Azanian struggle, and a great Pan Africanist leader.

He died at the age of 77, his political career having spanned over all the great events of this century. His life was like a panorama of the Azanian liberation struggle. Both Uncle Zeph and his family, in particular his wife Urbanah, made great sacrifices in the struggle for liberation. The torture and beatings he suffered in prison would have broken a lesser person, but with Uncle Zeph it strengthened his resolve to fight the apartheid system of national oppression.

Zeph was born a year after the inauguration of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC - later to become African National Congress (ANC). The SANNC was formed to challenge the notorious Land Act of 1913 which finalised the dispossession of the African people of their land. After 250 years of land wars, the Act pushed African people into the barren reserves, about 6.7 per cent of the land. As a child, Zeph was involved in this struggle, and would continue to be involved for the rest of his life. The question of regaining our land, stolen by the white supremacist minority, is a central issue for the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC).

Zeph's political career began at St Peter's College in the early 1930s when he was already a political firebrand. Amongst his fellow students was Ezekiel Mphahlele who became a leading writer in Azania. Zeke and Zeph were close allies in the struggle over education. Zeph belonged to the ANC Youth League where so much of the modern politics of the liberation struggle was forged in intense debate and argument amongst personalities who were to become household names in the liberation struggle - Mandela,

## Apartheid violates agreements

CAROLINE HODD/CAT WIENER

The ANC's position of maintaining talks with the apartheid government is presenting it with increasing problems.

Its refusal to break off talks after the arrest of leading ANC members, including 'Mac' Maharaj and Billy Nair, has confused its own supporters, with even the liberal pro-ANC *Weekly Mail* asking, 'At what stage does the ANC retaliate by pulling out?'; meanwhile it has given the Nationalist government unlimited confidence to pursue its own agenda.

The regime is openly flouting the Groote Schuur and Pretoria minutes. Having agreed to release all political prisoners by the end of December, it has in fact released only 60. At least 3,500 political prisoners remain behind bars, and the government plans to limit severely its definition of a 'political' offence. The Human Rights Commission estimates that there are 290 political trials currently in progress. Thousands of ANC and PAC exiles are being required to make self-incriminating statements if they apply for indemnity, and the prospects for their return look bleak. Although the State of Emergency has been lifted in name, the Internal Security Act is widely used to detain without trial. Curfews have been imposed on 17 townships in the Reef in October and raw

South African Defence Force (SADF) recruits were posted at railway stations with orders to shoot to kill. The government is sitting back while ANC activists are rounded up in Bophutatswana, and its death squads continue to operate freely.

The Nationalists have abandoned any pretence of consulting with the ANC; in November the SADF imposed roadblocks and curfews at Crossroads and Khayelitsha to curb 'unrest' after squatter camps were razed, totally bypassing the ANC-government working groups in the area. Recently Viljoen declared that constitutional reforms could be expected to take at least five years - falling far short of the demand for a constituent assembly which the ANC, alongside the PAC and AZAPO, have called for.

Meanwhile the violence in Natal and other parts of South Africa continues, with the SADF blatantly supporting the Inkatha forces, offering them weapons and transport and taking part in their atrocities. The ANC has again postponed a meeting with Inkatha to try to end the violence. With the ANC unable or unwilling to take the initiative to halt the violence, the state remains able to exploit the situation for its own ends. Under pressure from its supporters in the townships, who are demanding weapons to defend their communities, the ANC is talking now of the armed struggle

being 'postponed' rather than ended.

The pressure from the townships has exposed the tensions within the ANC itself. Two hundred black councillors have been forced to resign this year in the Transvaal alone, with 24 out of 82 stooge councils toppled by the waves of unrest around rent and service charge boycotts, and the razing of squatter camps. Conservative-run councils responded by cutting off water and electricity to township residents, prompting mass stay-aways, boycotts and demonstrations. Running battles broke out when the police attacked marches with teargas and rubber bullets, and the South African press ran reports of townships like 'war zones'. The Civic Associations of the Southern Transvaal (CAST), led by COSATU activist Moses Mayekiso and members of the UDF, have announced mass mobilisations to force all stooge councillors to resign by 30 November so that there can be new municipal elections on the basis of one person, one vote to 'effect the transfer of power to the majority of the people'. A whole section of the movement at the grassroots is showing that it is not prepared to wait for the apartheid regime's 'reforms' and is concerned with tackling township problems head-on. The ANC has responded warily, warning the civic associations not to subvert the thrust of na-

tional constitutional negotiations. However, it cannot ignore the momentum and the impatience of the black working class at seeing no change after so many promises: it is this pressure which lies behind its increasingly outspoken criticism of the regime.

At the same time, however, sections of the movement are pushing from another direction. Recent remarks by Thabo Mbeki suggested to many that the ANC was reconsidering its position on sanctions. While the ANC was quick to claim that his comments were misinterpreted, there is no doubt that a major debate is taking place within the movement, with the ANC's liberal allies such as the Democratic Party, and the imperialists pushing for the lifting of sanctions. While the ANC is keen to maintain support from these forces, it is also aware that having conceded the armed struggle, sanctions are its final card in the bid for a negotiated settlement.

The ANC has left itself with very little room for manoeuvre. Unable to deal with these conflicting pressures, it appears to have no clear position at the moment around which to rally its different forces. It is this confusion which lies behind the postponement of its national conference in December; for the battle to be fought out there would mean a decision that would split the movement: to side with the revolutionary youth of the town-



### CAMPAINING WITH FRFI AND CITY AA

■ 15 October: City AA picketed the *Guardian* offices to protest at its refusal to report the NACTU-backed Zebediela strike. 1,500 black workers on Zebediela Cityrus Estate - of which FW de Klerk is a trustee - have been on strike for three months for decent conditions and have been harassed, intimidated and evicted by Zebediela security guards. City AA has launched a solidarity campaign with pickets and actions against Outspan oranges. (The *Guardian* printed a report two weeks later.)

■ 18-19 October: City AA member Kathy Fernand attended the UN Special Committee on Apartheid at the invitation of the PAC and presented a document calling for support from the international movement for all forces fighting against apartheid and for national liberation, and the continuation of sanctions.

■ 20 October: City AA and FRFI attended the AAM 'From Apartheid to Democracy' conference; the PAC, AZAPO and other non-ANC sections of the movement were excluded, a motion calling for non-sectarian solidarity was ridiculed and FRFI sellers were assaulted by Paul Brennan, a leading member of SATIS.

■ Speakers at City AA meetings in recent months have included: PAC Foreign Secretary Gora Ebrahim; David Kitson (ANC); AZAPO Publicity Secretary Strini Moodley; WOSA; SACOS and the Western Saharan liberation movement, Polisario. ■



On 12 October this year the five month long trial of prisoners from the Risley Remand Centre culminated in a massive victory for all prisoners and an equally massive defeat for the Home Office prison department. Every prisoner, ex-prisoner and class-conscious person must have rejoiced wholeheartedly when all 20 defendants were acquitted of all charges arising from the three day long protest in May 1988.

In January 1989 Wadi Williams, accused number one in the Risley trial and a pivotal figure in the protest, wrote an article for *FRFI* describing the prisoners' uprising against conditions and brutality at Risley. This article never reached us and surfaced in court labelled 'Wadi 3' and wielded by the prosecution as definitive evidence of conspiracy to riot. But to no avail! The innocence of the Risley protesters and the justification of their actions

were upheld by the jury's unanimous verdicts. We are now very happy to be able to print 'Wadi 3' in full together with an account of the trial itself by Wadi's solicitor, Jeremy Hawthorn.

The victory is immense but the ordeal is not quite over. The prison authorities do not take kindly to losing. In a statement prepared while the jury were deliberating, Wadi Williams explains:

'Since 3 May when our protest at

Risley ended, we have been moved to the four corners of England – from London to Durham, via Hull and Birmingham. There has been a systematic policy of harassment and intimidation directed at our families and friends, all designed to pressure us into changing our pleas to guilty. In fact before and during the trial several defendants have been savagely beaten and assaulted (Jason Simpson, Mark Gillan, John Dillon, Les Walker to name a few). There

are several cases pending against prison staff – from assault to the interference of post and theft of cash etc – we have been promised an extremely hot reception at the end of the trial.'

*FRFI* salutes and congratulates the Risley defendants. We know this victory will inspire and hearten all those currently facing charges arising from the Strangeways and other protests this year. We look forward to more victories.

# Risley 54 are innocent!

## The Trial

Jubilant applause came from the dock as jurors delivered verdicts of Not Guilty. But greater praise is due to those who, having carried through a three-day protest, then had to survive a five-month trial. Solicitor JEREMY HAWTHORN describes the trial.

They had faced impressive odds. Enormous damage was done to D wing and they were there while it happened. Most were supposedly bang to rights in 36 hours of video. They were victims of identification procedures which broke all the rules of video evidence. Several were now serving long prison terms – so who would believe them?

Add to that the procedure. The prosecution obtained a 'voluntary bill of indictment', depriving the defence of using committal proceedings to test evidence in advance. The trial judge was renowned for hostility to defendants and for heavy sentencing. Trips to and from court were marked by tight and oppressive security measures.

Then the charge itself – riot, a charge never used in prison before. What did it mean, 'unlawful violence for a common purpose'? Defendants came under the heaviest pressure to plead Guilty, even from lawyers who said there was no defence.

Yet in a sense the Home Office had lost the battle before it started. 'Grisley Risley' had an appalling reputation in Liverpool since the 1960s. HM Inspectorate reports of 1980 and 1988 were extremely critical. The spate of suicides was well-covered by local media. Even the official inquiry into this very incident (conveniently never published) made its number one recommendation that Risley should close.

How to make these diabolical conditions legally 'relevant'? As soon as the trial began it became clear the incident was not mindless damage but a protest for change. The main argument was that inmates could use 'reasonable force' as they were, so to speak, 'falsely imprisoned'.

It could also be said that inmates acted in 'self-defence'. When the riot bell went they were faced with an ill-ordered rabble of officers charging up the stairs with no overall control, varying levels of training and precious little idea of what they were doing. Shades of Hull '76, Scrubs '79 – would this be Risley '89? The only safe course was to 'barricade in' until safety could be guaranteed.

Over 70 prison officers gave evidence. Several were directly contradicted by the video. Once shown up, they began to admit racial abuse was rife at Risley. They admitted that 'unauthorised pyrotechnics' were brought in on 1 May and actually issued for use. They admitted hosing inmates on the first night. They ad-

mitted there was a plan the second day to retake D Wing by force. Many showed complete ignorance of suicide prevention. The governor made much of his great initiative to improve the atrocious diet: a pink 'super bun' at 7pm each day!

To be fair, several officers agreed Risley was a dump and the ex-Regional Director Driscoll said he'd tried for four years to close it.

On video were the extensive negotiations between inmates and whoever was prepared to listen. Only on the third day did the authorities take the talks seriously: once that happened the protesters agreed conditions and a time for surrender and kept their bargain.

Clearly on both 'conditions' and 'negotiations', the prosecution were in trouble. But there remained 'Wadi 3', a report composed for *FRFI* by Wadi Williams at Hull prison and handed to the police by his course tutor. (Moral: free speech in prison can seriously damage your defence.) This was only 'evidence' against Williams but it was introduced to try to smear the entire protest and cause dissension among defendants. As it turned out though, even this tactic backfired. Wadi admitted a bit of 'journalistic licence' and this intensely readable rhapsody enlivened the tedium of the trial at just the right moment.

Ten defendants gave evidence and each had a different tale. It was obvious the grievances were too many to have been made up: conditions cried out for a protest and, when it happened inmates had to protect themselves.

Even the best efforts of the judge could not convict anyone. He disallowed the defence of 'lawful protest' and made it clear he didn't believe the 'self-defence' argument. When the jury on their second day out asked for guidance he gave it and immediately eight were acquitted with a ninth let out later that day. Come the fifth day he volunteered more guidance, so biased as to leave even the jurors open-mouthed. Acquittals of the remaining 11 followed.

Time will tell whether the Home Office have learnt anything from this case. But even if they haven't, some of the general public have. If there is a single message it is that prisoners deserve more respect and better conditions. Prisoners everywhere can thank the Risley defendants for their courage and perseverance. ■



ABOVE: Prisoners on the roof at 'Gris Ris'

**At last! WADI WILLIAMS' report of the Uprising for *FRFI*, written in January 1989, used as evidence for the prosecution in the trial, to no avail, the truth will out ...**

## 'Wadi 3'

The *Guardian* referred to 'waves of drug-propelled inmates'. The Chairman of the POA called it an 'orgy of destruction'. Others saw fit to suggest that a small group of possibly psychologically disturbed drug-addicted psychopaths had terrorised the remand prison population into wrecking an otherwise beautifully furnished and run prison. These are but a small example of the establishment and the state's attempts to malign, obscure and distort the real and far-reaching import of the 1 May drama/uprising. This article is an attempt by us (the 'Risley 54') to counter this exercise in misinformation and set the events of May in their proper context, as a significant part of the profound process of change which is unfolding before us. The 1 May Risley rebellion went beyond the confines of the remand system and the prison system in general. It carried within it the seeds of the spirit of human resistance and struggle. In our own small way we are making a telling contribution to the process ... however it must be said that we are seriously constrained as to what we can say here, given that our trial for Riot and Criminal Damage is pending. With this proviso in mind, this is part of our tale.

The now famous observation by Judge Tumim that Risley was 'barbarous and squalid' assumes terrifying substance when it is noted that six of the suicides in the last decade occurred in the last year, and that in a five-week period in 1988 there were three suicides. This 'squalor and barbarism' was not limited purely to the carnage of inmate corpses but also manifested itself in the filthy, inhuman squalor and putrid conditions which drove a great many of us to the fringes of suicide, when, that is, it did

not drive us out of our minds completely.

As an example of the 'squalid and filthy' conditions we faced, it was not unusual or uncommon to find that when we went to collect our meals, the entire length of the long corridor was lined with a praetorian guard of dead or living cockroaches. When we complained about this the usual response was to suggest that we incorporate the protein-rich cockroach into our diet.

What is true of institutional hy-

giene held with equal force in regard to the medical facilities provided. As the Dunbar Report noted, 'the hospital was found to be in a particularly bad state. Some regularly occupied areas were not fit for human habitation. The place was inadequately cleaned and recesses were unhygienic.' This is but the tip of the iceberg; in reality inmates were regularly beaten and abused in the hospital. In fact the staff were so callous that inmate suicides and attempted suicides were regarded as of little or no relevance when, that is, they were not treated as cause for a deluge of sick jokes.

To this nightmare must be added the daily struggle to deal with the stench of 'shit and piss' smeared walls, while coping with months on remand in overcrowded cages within an architecturally oppressive and destructive environment ... To say our condition was inhuman and barbaric is possibly the understatement of the age.

It was this institutional callousness and environmental brutality which defined the texture of 'Gris Ris', and it is our collective refusal to tolerate this celebration of brutality, and challenge and resist the culture and politics of 'barbarism and squalor' which define the events of 1-3 May.

The chronology of events are as follows: on 30 April (Sunday) there had been a disturbance in B wing over a host of issues (food, living conditions, etc). Despite the fact that D wing was not involved in this initial protest and is quite a long way from B wing, the MUFTI Squad chose to make a show of force by marching into D wing at 11pm! (at night) banging on our cell doors, abusing all and sundry and parading up and down the landings till the early hours of Monday morning – clearly a deliber-





## Close down Risley and Armley! Stop deaths and brutality!

The Home Office persists in commissioning inquiries into prison 'disturbances' and conditions, then ignoring their conclusions. Just as David Waddington and his team have taken no notice of the Dunbar report into Risley which recommended that it be closed down following the protest, they are now hell-bent on ignoring, yet again, their own Chief Inspector of Prisons, Judge Stephen Tumim.

Tumim's latest report into Armley prison lambastes the regime, especially B-wing where young offenders on remand are kept and where there have been six suicides in the last two years. It recommends that young offenders no longer be kept at Armley. This, along with all the other main proposals in the report, was firmly rejected by David Waddington.

In an earlier report Tumim condemned the treatment of remand prisoners at Risley. This, of course, went unheeded and Risley's inhabitants were forced to take their fate into their own hands. Will nothing short of the same shake the walls of Armley?

**LEFT: Armley Prison – one of Thatcher's Victorian values**

## 'it is amazing the awesome creative strength released in people whom 'society' had for so long dismissed as irrelevant'

cluded in the social and political agenda. In short with our actions we wanted to fashion an eloquent political and social statement which went beyond the confines of prison and as such, (in addition to our public statement, registering our profound displeasure and anger, articulating our position vis à vis the need for change and a public enquiry) it became crucial that we held on to D wing for at least 72 hours and then only call that stage of the uprising to a close, when and only when we felt the time was right and our basic conditions had been met. As a result, for the next 72 hours, we were engaged in almost continuous skirmishes, during which we overcame and repelled assaults ranging from midnight attacks with high-pressure water hoses (which nearly blew some of us off the roof) to sneak night-time attacks. Suffice to say we were able to resist all these assaults.

During the uprising, we were also resolved to conduct ourselves in a most democratic/isocratic manner. So we arranged to have frequent mass assemblies, which we all attended (apart from those on guard duty) and during which all salient issues were discussed and voted on; thus avoiding the pitfalls of creating a cabal of leaders. In our assemblies we discussed and determined strategies: from food distribution, sleeping rota, guard duties, defence, honing our demands and negotiation position, to determining our response to the Home Office proposals. We also decided to invite all those who were not sure they wished to continue the struggle to leave, and over a 24-hour period we were able to persuade the waverers, or at least those who no longer had the stomach for the fight to leave... and thus was born...

**THE RISLEY 54  
WE WHO WERE TOTALLY COMMITTED  
TO THE UPRISING**

On 3 May after long, protracted and

## Report on the Woolf Inquiry

**Former Strangeways prisoner ERIC ALLISON has been attending the hearings of the Lord Justice Woolf Inquiry into Prison Disturbances and reporting on them for FRFI. Below he gives his view of the final, seminar stage. It is the view of FRFI that while the Woolf Inquiry may indeed make progressive recommendations, without consistent public pressure on the Home Office, their implementation is unlikely to be far-reaching.**

On 31 October the Woolf Inquiry finished hearing evidence in public. I attended and spoke at two of the seminars, one on 'Active Regimes in Prison' and the last one which discussed the concept of 'Justice in Prisons'.

I came away feeling encouraged; it would have been difficult not to, as speaker after speaker urged the Inquiry to do something about the appalling state of our prisons. Indeed there was so much goodwill around the tables that I had to remind myself that some of the participants (Home Office, PGA, POA etc) were in some way responsible for the stinking conditions that prisoners endure daily.

The exercise was not entirely without fault. I made the point that there were only two ex-prisoners at the seminars – myself and Geoff Coggan from the National Prisoners' Movement. I stated that prisoners' voices must be heard and urged Woolf to recommend changes that allowed prisoners to have some form of collective voice. But overall, I repeat that was forced to take a positive view. The mass of opinion was for reform and Woolf said nothing to indicate that he was in any way out of step with the mood.

I expect many recommendations for change. For example, I am certain that Woolf will propose a code of minimum standards which will be legally enforceable. I'm hopeful that the Prison Medical Service will come under the auspices of the NHS. This proposal was put forward many times by people that I would expect Woolf to take notice of. Given their record, the PMS vigorously opposed the view, of course. For the rest, we shall have to wait and see, though I am hopeful that in future prisoners' voices will be heard. The heroes who brought about this inquiry deserve better than what I fear they will eventually get. If Woolf does change our lousy gaols we must not forget who it is down to. ■

ate act of provocation.

We in D wing, independently of B wing, had decided to commemorate 1 May by registering our displeasure with our condition of captivity, and demonstrating our solidarity with the multitudes of dispossessed. Our intention was to conduct a peaceful 'sit down' protest, to call attention to the nightmare of Risley in particular and our reality in general. The plan was to demand a public enquiry into Risley, present the Administration with a list of changes which required immediate implementation. We were even at this state acutely aware of the need to conduct both an internal and public protest in order to bring this whole issue to the attention of both the Home Office and the general public. With this in mind we intended, amongst other things, to demand access to the press.

At about 10am, we assembled in the caged exercise yard to start our protest. However it soon became clear that the MUFTI Squad was lurking in the connecting corridor, while dog-handlers were gathering on the other side of the fences. Clearly a sit-down protest on the exercise yard would have left us open to a dual attack from the MUFTI Squad and the dogs. We therefore decided to transfer the protest indoors, to one of the landings, we reasoned that given the limited access, if the Administration decided to attack it was a defensible position.

Over 120-plus inmates assembled on landing 5, which usually housed 30-40 inmates. Before dialogue could be opened, the screws present simply looked round and contemptuously told us to 'get behind our doors'. This contemptuous dismissal of our peaceful protest was the trigger which finally ignited the uprising. Someone threw a cup, the screws then hit the alarm/riot bell and bolted from the landing.

With the MUFTI on the ground floor corridor rushing up the stairs we

had a serious head-on confrontation – we were seriously concerned for our safety, given the squad's reputation for gross violence and brutality, we were faced with the stark choice of either waiting passively to be brutalised and violated, or resisting and defending ourselves by any means necessary. We took the latter course.

We quickly began to fashion a barricade, and the struggle for control of the wing was on. We were obliged to confront the staves and shields of the MUFTI with whatever was immediately to hand. This included pouring concentrated liquid soap down the stairs, to prevent them rushing up the stairwell, doors were taken off their hinges and used to barricade the main access area. All this, while some of us were engaged in hand-to-hand combat for control of the landing. After 10-15 minutes of fierce combat we secured control of landing 5 and then turned our attention to landing 6. To gain access, we had to breach a wall (this we did using a cell door). With our control of landing 5 and 6, we all but had internal control of D wing, however we were still vulnerable to possible counter-attacks via the main and flat roofs of D wing. In fact there was a race between us and the MUFTI as to who would gain control of the flat roof connecting the wing. Again, by using the steel cell doors with a relay of eight inmates we were able to blast our way through one of the main walls, enabling us to gain access to the flat roof, just as the MUFTI were assembling to storm the area. There then ensued a brief but fierce struggle, after which they retreated and we were able to establish our defensive line and take control of the main roof and effectively take control of D wing... the uprising was now in full swing!

In the course of the struggle for D wing it became clear that only a full scale protest and uprising could bring the whole issue to the public's attention and ensure that we are in-

complex discussions and negotiations with representatives of the State (the Home Office) our demands were met and that stage in the uprising was brought to a close. As you are probably aware, we were subsequently charged with two counts of Riot and Criminal Damage – which carry a combined tariff of 20 years' imprisonment. The pre-trial review is set for 9 April and assuming the indictment is not quashed then the trial is due to start at Liverpool Crown Court on 14 May 1990. Clearly we have entered a new terrain and context of struggle. *A luta continua!*

It is no exaggeration to say that the Risley Uprising contained profound lessons which carry great relevance and significance for the wider struggle. Firstly the Risley Uprising made clear that even in the most repressive, difficult and intimidating of terrains, Marx's observation on the revolutionary and militant potential of the lumpen-proletariat – the non-aristocrats of the working class – holds true. Secondly in the crucible of struggle, capital and the state's ploy of divide and rule along racial lines can be successfully subverted. For example, despite explicit attempts by some screws to fracture our collective solidarity and struggle along racial lines, by shouting to inmates to 'throw the niggers off the roof' and 'how can you be led by niggers?' etc we held firm. And to this extent the Risley 54 made a profound anti-racist statement and affirmed the 'triumph of the human spirit'. Unquestionably the uprising struck a powerful blow in support of the struggle against racism.

Furthermore the Risley Uprising was an eloquent and elegant demonstration of the power and cohesive force of a truly egalitarian/isocratic organisation. We functioned and held together in the most difficult of circumstances, in no small measure because we took a conscious decision to be isocratic and 'avoid the pitfalls'

of rigid formal leadership. Instead we subjected all relevant decisions to mass discussion and debate, from which a consensus or majority verdict emerged. This open isocratic process served to determine our positions and actions. In this way both responsibility and power were equally and equitably distributed. It is amazing the awesome creative strength this released in people whom 'society' had for so long dismissed as irrelevant.

Finally the Risley Uprising also demonstrated that the 'human spirit' remains **UNBROKEN! UNBOWED! UNTWISTED! SALUD! REVOLUTION IS THE SOLUTION! ON BEHALF OF THE 'RISLEY 54' WADIKE**

### Prisoners' Birthdays

**Hugh Doherty** 338636, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5TZ **7 December**  
**Noel Gibson** 879225, HMP Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5RS **11 December**  
**Gerald McDonnell** B75882, HMP Leicester, Welford Road, Leicester LA2 7AJ **19 December**

### PRISONERS FUND

Each issue it costs £120 to send FRFI to prisoners. A subscription for a prisoner costs £9.00 and prisoners cannot afford to pay this. We are appealing to our readers to take out a subscription on behalf of a prisoner or make a donation to the Prisoners Fund.

☐ I enclose a donation of £  
to help pay for a prisoner's subscription to FRFI. (Cheques/POs to 'Larkin Publications')

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Return to FRFI, BCM Box 5909,  
London WC1N 3XX



# The North-South divide and global capitalism

Over the past ten years of Thatcherism the British economy has undergone the most serious phase of reorganisation and restructuring since the 1930s. By 1979 the UK had the slowest rate of growth and the lowest per capita income of any of the imperialist nations. The current decade of Tory rule began with widespread deindustrialisation, an economic crisis of monumental proportions, escalating inflation, high unemployment and the withdrawal of the state from large areas of economic and social life. Without a doubt the Thatcher government has sought to alter every aspect of the post-war British economy by unleashing the 'discipline' of the market on it with devastating geographical and social effects; effects that are commonly referred to as the North-South divide. JOHN ARMSTRONG argues in this DISCUSSION ARTICLE that the North-South divide is not a regional problem but a reflection of the operation of transnational companies.

## TWO NATIONS BRITAIN

It was Benjamin Disraeli in the 1880s who first coined the phrase 'two nations' to describe the uneven development of the British economy. But it was not until the interwar depression that the skewed nature of the UK and the dominance of London over the north really became apparent. Within the UK at the present time it is once again, however, in the north where industries are being reorganised and 'restructured'. The south on the other hand is less 'burdened' by such industries and is thus an attractive location for the next round of investments and jobs. Between 1971-79 for example the north lost some 500,000 jobs in manufacturing alone compared to 300,000 jobs lost in the same sector in the south. Since 1979 the manufacturing sector in the UK has lost over two million jobs, 1.4 million of them in the north.

The south of Britain by contrast has an average unemployment rate of 3 per cent. Between 1979-88 London for example saw its service employment rise to over one million which more than made up for the losses in its manufacturing industry. In the north in the same period the increase in service employment was a paltry 400,000. In short, whilst there has been a net increase in total employment of over a million jobs in the UK over the past ten years, 850,000 of them have been created in the south, whilst in the north, which lost over 1.5 million jobs, only 150,000 have emerged. The south of England therefore is seen by the Thatcherites as an exemplar of the new economy in which services rather than manufacturing are the source of wealth creation, economic growth and market 'success'.

## RESTRUCTURING GLOBAL CAPITALISM

The explanation for the job losses in the northern regions however, is not the much publicised overmanning of industry in the north or the region's reliance on public sector industries, but the shifting of production by Transnational Corporations (TNCs) to locations overseas after the abolition of exchange controls in 1979. Thus between 1979-86 Britain's 40 largest manufacturing TNCs cut over 400,000 jobs in the UK and yet, in the same period, they created 125,000 jobs abroad. Needless to say, it was the north that was the hardest hit in the process. In the north west for example, unemployment now stands at 18 per cent. In Scotland it is 16 per cent whilst in the West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside it is close to 15 per cent and rising.

What we are in fact witnessing then is the Thatcher regime's compliance with the restructuring and reorganising of UK, US and Japanese TNCs (like ICI, Ford and Nissan) on a worldwide scale. For these powerful actors in the world economy are presently aiming at nothing less than the coordination of production and the exploitation of consumer markets on



a truly global basis. The crux of such a strategy on the part of the TNCs is to reduce their labour costs and increase the volume of their sales. The key to power in this newly materialising phase of capitalism, however, is the competitive requirement that these corporations become both fully integrated and geographically 'foot-loose' in order to be able to take advantage of the increasingly minute differences between contrasting regions of the world economy.

Through the use of new information and communications technologies in the form of international telecommunications and computer systems, together with flexible production working arrangements, these new corporate strategies mean that products from cars to microwaves can be produced at will by almost any group of workers switched into the transnational network. Thus the majority of the new production complexes opening up around the world are basically assembly-only 'branch plants' which need few skills in their construction or operation because consumer products are becoming increasingly standardised across the world. The bulk of TNC production, however, is at the moment concentrated in the cheap labour pools on the periphery of the world economy and this is one of the reasons why the TNCs are overjoyed at the tearing down of the Berlin Wall. The unification of Germany will not only provide new markets; it will also reduce labour costs and allow a shift of production away from the increasingly turbulent and indebted 'Third World' to the low wage and 'safe' locations of Eastern Europe.

The crucial point is that this will only remain the case as long as East Germany or any other region of the globe exhibits the conditions required by corporate capital. For as soon as costs rise or profits are

threatened the transnationals will take off for new feeding grounds elsewhere without a thought for the crippled communities they leave behind. Whether those communities are in the West Midlands or in West Africa makes no difference. In this respect at least the TNCs aspire to a sort of 'statelessness', though of course if their very existence is threatened, as the Gulf crisis amply demonstrates, Standard Oil, Exxon, Texaco and the rest have no qualms about calling in the Pentagon and the State Department. Meanwhile, the corporate control and command centres of multinational capital in the form of company headquarters and research and development facilities remain out of any real danger in the metropolitan cities of the 'first' world such as London, Tokyo and New York.

Within the British economy then these processes are having a particularly profound impact as the Thatcher government carries out its political strategy to turn the UK into a low wage 'screwdriver' economy suitable for the requirements of global business. This strategy also explains why it has spent much of the past ten years de-industrialising and privatising the economy and slimming down manufacturing industry whilst at the same time encouraging the growth of free markets, new forms of work 'flexibility' and the introduction of new technologies into more and more areas of production. What is missing from the account of the Thatcher government on the issue of the North-South divide then is any reference to its material basis in the activities of the TNCs.

## THE FAVOURED SOUTH

Another aspect of the regional imbalance in the UK economy which is linked to the restructuring of the world economy is the fact that it is in London and the south that the largest companies have their financial and administrative headquarters and technically advanced research and development facilities which control the activities of the transnationals' branch plants worldwide. These higher order corporate functions are not only the last to close in a recession, they also require large numbers of educated and skilled technicians, managers and administrators; the favoured class of the Thatcherites. And it is this class, of course, which is generating the rapidly expanding service sector in the south which is increasingly staffed by the part-time and low-paid members of the new 'do you want fries with that?' economy.

The south is also better placed than the north for economic recovery, for two other reasons connected to the operations of the TNCs. The first is that in the UK they need to be near to the City of London and the heartland of European business operations: the Amsterdam-Berlin-Brussels Triangle (hence the Channel Tunnel). The second reason is that the majority of the TNCs, despite their free market rhetoric, actually live off the state in the form of government military contracts. And in order to secure such contracts companies like Ferranti and Plessey need to be in or around London to maintain their business contacts in the relevant ministries. What is, then, a startling piece of political chicanery is how the state intervention practised by the Tories on behalf of their friends in the south is 'transformed' into a miracle of 'market forces' by the likes of Lord Young, whilst in the north, Wales and Scotland such state 'intervention' (eg at the Ravenscraig steel

plant) is seen as special pleading on behalf of 'overmanned' and 'un-competitive' regions.

## BRITAIN'S GROWING DIVIDE: THE CONSEQUENCES

Throughout the postwar period regional imbalances in the UK have been a recurring phenomenon that in the Thatcher years have intensified the uneven development of the country. Even the recent 'boom' in the mid-eighties was focused on the south. Gross Domestic Product per head for example grew by 24 per cent in the southern half of Britain in the 1980s but in the north this figure was a mere 17 per cent. In the south these figures were also a contributory factor to the overheating of the economy and the property spiral which at the present time has left the whole of the UK economy with an inflation rate of over 10 per cent. The knock-on effects of these pressures are also at the centre of the exodus of the TNCs from the high rent capital. What is worth noting, however, is that these corporate shifts outward from London are removals of only a few miles to the outer fringes and almost all are focused on the lower order functions of the firms concerned (eg routine administrative work). The 'spatial hierarchy' of capital in the UK is still therefore very much intact.

Yet at the same time the boom in the south has itself been very uneven. The difficulties of inner London are well known in areas such as Hackney and Tower Hamlets, where unemployment is as high as it is in parts of Tyneside. The sky-high house prices and rents in the capital city are another divisive factor here since London has a growing number of people who are not only unemployed but who are also homeless. Many of these are of course the displaced population from the north who cannot get jobs in their towns of origin due to the flight of the TNCs from the regions. Like their landless compatriots in the nations of the oppressed they too drift into the metropolis. In the south then, it is not all 'high-tech corridors' along



the M4 and labour shortages; it is also down on the Embankment and the Strand the birthplace of the 'Third World' inside the heart of British imperialism.

As cuts in regional aid and competition between individual regions hots up, the increasing fragmentation of the UK is plain for all to see. But the nature of the problem is not the people or the regions themselves. The problem is the imperialist global business system and the increasingly local effect that the TNCs have on individual nations like the UK which, in the context of the integration of Europe, is rapidly becoming a marginal region itself. The North-South divide is really only a manifestation of this dual tendency. At the world level the battle is between the northern and southern hemispheres; between the imperialist nations and the nations of the oppressed. In the UK the division between the north and the south represents the same phenomenon on a minor scale: the growing inequality between the centre of capitalism and its periphery. ■

## RCG DAYSCHOOLS

**Oil Imperialism and the Class Struggle.** Sessions on: Gulf Crisis and the international class struggle; British imperialism in the Middle East; United Nations: a force for progress? Imperialist war preparation – the latest phase; Labour imperialism and the class struggle.

**London: Sunday 2 December 10am to 5pm**

Caxton House, St John's Way, Archway, N19 (nearest tube Archway). Entrance £4/£2 unwaged. For more details phone 071 837 1688

**Manchester: Sunday 9 December 10am to 5pm**

Pakistani Community Centre, Stockport Rd, Manchester. Entrance £4/£2 unwaged. For more details write to PO Box 80, Manchester M60 1RY

## RCG PUBLIC MEETING

**British hands off the Middle East! Imperialist Troops out of the Gulf! Self-determination for Kurdistan! Victory to the Palestinian Revolution!** Thursday 22 November, 7.30pm. Dundee: Wellgate Library.

## PUBLIC FILM SHOWS

**British Labour and British imperialism. The People's Flag.**

A five-part documentary history of the British labour movement. Public film shows in London and Manchester. All meetings begin at 7pm.

All meetings in **Manchester** held at Longsight Library, Stockport Road, entrance – £1/50p unwaged (all 5 films for £3/£1.50 unwaged); all meetings in **London** held at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 (Holborn tube) *except Wednesday 19 December: held at Friends Meeting House, St. Martins Lane, WC2 (Charing Cross and Leicester Square tubes), entrance – £1/50p unwaged.*

**The first betrayal 1914-1931:** Manchester, Thursday 6 December.

**Fascism and War 1931-1945:** London, Wednesday 28 November; Manchester, Thursday 10 January.

**Victory to Consensus 1945-1964:** London, Wednesday 19 December; Manchester, Thursday 14 February.

**Who runs the country? 1964-1979:** London, Wednesday 23 January; Manchester, Thursday 14 March.

**The enemy within 1979-1987:** London, Wednesday 20 February; Manchester, 11 April.

## Che Guevara and the fight for socialism in Cuba today

Hear Cuban economist **Carlos Tablada** Friday 30 November, 7pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn tube)

## VIGIL

**in support of the hunger strikers in Kurdistan**

Friday 23 November, 2.15-10pm, outside St. Martin's in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, London.

**Seminar: Kurdistan — history and culture**

Saturday 1 December, 11am-7.30pm Haringey Community Trade Union Centre, 2a Brabant Road, London N22. (Wood Green tube) Tickets: £2.50/£1.50 unwaged.

For further details contact Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, Unit 6, Millers House, 2 Millers Terrace, London E8. 071 586 5892.

## DEWSBURY 82

**Defence Campaign £10,000 hardship appeal**

The Dewsbury 82 Defence Campaign to defend those arrested for resisting fascists in Dewsbury on 24 June 1989, is appealing for financial support to assist the defendants and their families. The trials are continuing. Already one defendant has lost his job because of the amount of time he had to spend at court.

Send your donations to the campaign c/o SK CRC 24 Westgate, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.



Ana Lucia Gelabert, a communist prisoner in the US whose letters have been printed in the last two issues of *FRFI* has been denied her right to read our newspaper. We are asking all our readers to write letters to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Director's Review Committee, PO Box 99, Huntsville, Texas 77342-0099, USA, protesting at their decision to withhold *FRFI* from Ana Lucia.

## Letter from Palestine

**R**evolutionary greetings from the occupied land. I arrived here the week of the massacre at the Dome of the Rock. You can imagine how difficult the situation is – roads are closed off more and more by the army preventing those from the occupied territories from entering Jerusalem or the Green Line – and we had the visit from Hurd who made his outrageous statement of not agreeing to a Palestinian state or talks with the PLO, leading to a boycott of a press conference (or meeting) by the Palestinian right and left, which is unusual. Hurd showed up to an empty hall. Also, gas masks have already been distributed to all the Jewish population and now to Palestinians in Jerusalem – however those who have had so-called security offences in former political prisoners were not given them. There is a story of Palestinian children from one area of Jerusalem (after trying on their masks) who raised their fingers in the victory sign and said 'Viva Saddam!' – this is the mood of the general population – slogans on the wall hail Saddam. As one Palestinian remarked: 'It is grabbing on to something, anything, while one is drowning.' As for the left, they agree that Saddam is a dictator but see him as strong and possibly capable of uniting the Arab world. Basically, everything is black and white here – if you speak against Saddam then you are on the side of America – anti-American and anti-Western sentiment is even stronger than before – even the Israelis, who now are loudly proclaiming how 'anti-semitic' the British and Western press is!

I started my photography from the first day – and from the first day I 'lost' one of my films to the fascists after being beaten up and thrown into one of their jeeps – but this can only encourage me further.

The meeting in Jordan of the left-wing parties and progressives was one of the crucial reasons as to why Saudi Arabia cut off its oil supplies to Jordan – actually for allowing George Habbash a platform and also led to a very strong (?) letter from Baker to King Hussein condemning the meeting. NADIA

## FRFI Xmas Fund Drive

Between now and January 1991 *FRFI* needs to raise £1,300 to ensure that we can enter the new year with sufficient political and practical resources to continue our revolutionary work. This is a vital time for communist politics: the imperialists are again planning for war; socialist Cuba is fighting to survive; the Tories are in disarray as the working class begins the process of fighting to defend their living standards and democratic rights.

Next year new battles will be fought, new campaigns will be built, new political issues will confront revolutionaries. *FRFI* is the only consistent anti-imperialist newspaper on the British left. Through our coverage of the struggles of the working class at home and abroad we give a voice to the demands of the oppressed.

Help us to continue this work. Rush your donations to **Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX**. Make cheques/POs payable to Larkin Publications.

I/we wish to donate £\_\_\_\_\_ to the *FRFI* Xmas fund drive.

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# L E T T E R S

## The Gulf crisis and anti-imperialists

### Revolutionary defeatism

**A**s a regular reader of *FRFI*, I enjoy your copy whenever it reaches Belfast. As a comment on your political position, I would only indicate that it is unfortunate that you are not supporting the call for *revolutionary defeatism* of both sides in the Gulf. The clear position is that victory for US forces would create puppet regimes in the Middle East and bolster failing US hegemony in the world imperialist scene. Victory for Saddam, however, would only lead to the establishment of a local super power, reactionary in every way as its Ba'athist ideology dictates, including severe repression of workers and working class partisans. The only hope of victory for proletarian forces in the Arab nations is for civil war and the overthrow of the class of finance capital. Defeat for the US, whether from Iraq or the working class, would destabilise Western capital to our advantage. We must take this opportunity for increasing the pressure for revolution in Europe. This cannot be left until the Yanks reach Iraqi borders as for example the Irish Workers Group (Workers Power) argue. Organisation for revolution must begin now. I urge you to reconsider your position on this issue, it is far too important an issue not to rectify mistakes at the first opportunity.

S. HURST  
Belfast

### Reply to Cde Hurst

**T**he RCG's position is determined by the fact we are a



Bush prepares for the offensive with more troops

communist organisation fighting in Britain. 'Our' imperialist government is preparing for a war of imperialist subjugation, control and plunder. We work for the defeat of this imperialist venture because we oppose imperialist subjugation and plunder and because we want to see British imperialism destroyed. A defeat for British imperialism in the Gulf would be of enormous benefit to the working class and oppressed in the Middle East and in Britain.

We thus not only demand the immediate withdrawal of British troops, but also wage a practical campaign to build a movement to force British troops to withdraw. Such a withdrawal would constitute an actual defeat for imperialism. Whether it would sufficiently weaken the British state and enable the working class to mount a revolutionary challenge at home would depend on the relationship of class forces in

Britain, on the strength of working class political organisation and revolutionary determination. These are things that cannot be determined in advance. What can be determined in advance are the clear and precise slogans necessary to direct and organise the anti-imperialist movement in Britain.

Comrade Hurst's slogan 'for a revolutionary defeat of both sides' distracts from our main task, and is confused. We do not call for the defeat (revolutionary or otherwise) of Iraq. At the moment the biggest danger to the working class in the Middle East is not Saddam Hussein but imperialism.

Is comrade Hurst demanding that we in Britain call on Iraqi and Middle Eastern revolutionaries to organise revolutionary insurrection against the Saddam Hussein regime just as the imperialists have placed half a million troops to conquer the region, suppress

## Write to:

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or ring: 071-837 1688**

the anti-imperialist forces and destroy the working class? If he is, we politely refuse the offer.

Middle Eastern revolutionaries themselves have rejected the slogan for a 'revolutionary defeat of both sides'. They are organising to resist and defeat the imperialist invasion of the Gulf and if necessary fight alongside the Iraqi army. This they see as a necessary and preliminary stage in achieving their ultimate aims. They have correctly identified imperialism as the main danger of the period. For this position they have the support of the overwhelming majority of workers and oppressed in the region.

A slogan is designed to guide action. Calling for a 'revolutionary defeat of both sides in the Gulf' in the real world of politics and war amounts to nothing but empty rhetoric. We are living and fighting in Britain and must choose slogans which direct and organise the British working class to fight British imperialism. After all, as Lenin quite rightly pointed out, real internationalism in the imperialist countries consists in opposing 'one's own bourgeoisie'. It does not consist in a form of words which pretends to oppose the bourgeoisie everywhere but fails to do the one thing that can aid the Arab and international working class: concentrate all efforts on defeating the British imperialist state. EDDIE ABRAHAMS

## Letter from a US prisoner

**I** am a political prisoner (POW) serving time as a result of bombings and related acts of armed propaganda conducted during the mid-70s as a part of Seattle's George Jackson Brigade. I am just finishing my 15th year of continuous confinement, and I have another nine years to serve before I am eligible for parole. All of this because one of the Brigade's targets was the headquarters of the Department of Corrections (the same building that houses the parole board). I have not hurt anyone, nor do I have any history of violent behaviour, yet I am serving more time than most first degree murderers.

I am very concerned about what is taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I have been a defender of the USSR for a long time. I sided with Poland's communist party (albeit critical support) against Solidarity way back in 1980. And today it looks as if everything is falling apart. These are hard times to be a communist, at least that's the case here, and it looks tough everywhere. So we just try to keep the flame going until better times arrive.

I have added you to the mailing list for our newsletter (Prisoners' League News). We have a paper here called *Workers' World* that probably most closely represents my political viewpoints. It is very close to your own. I'll be looking forward to the next issue of *FRFI*. ED MEAD  
Washington, USA

## A reply to David Kitson

**Y**our publication of David Kitson's letter should help clear up some of the myths which the Trotskyist movement has assiduously engineered on the question of Lenin's attitude to the idea of permanent revolution. Lenin did not oppose the idea, but rather Trotsky's understanding of it. Also, later, the view defended by the Trotskyists that it was Stalin who first put forward the possibility of building socialism in one country. It is on record that Lenin was the first to put forward this theory. Our experience with Trotskyists is that they rarely ever study the writings of Lenin. This must also apply to Trotsky himself, or else he would never have attempted to split the Soviet Communist Party on this issue and later go on to found a movement based on the assumption that 'socialism in one country' is alien to Leninism. Thus in general terms the ideological foundations of Trotskyism act as a kind of barrier which prevents penetration to the scientific core of Leninism. Schooled in Trotskyism, many workers and intellectuals never arrive at a true understanding of Marxism-Leninism.

However, having made these points it is necessary to point out that there are at least two serious weaknesses in David Kitson's letter. The first is his position on Stalinism, when he says, 'Stalinism is just another swear word. Stalin is now thoroughly exploded. I regard Stalinism as a despotism, authoritarian,

bonapartist attitude which arose after the success of the revolution in the Soviet Union. . . .

Stalinism is not simply an attitude. In essence, Stalinism was a Soviet form of bonapartism, based on the relatively privileged, conservative top echelons of the party, state, military and trade union apparatus, leading to what some now call 'bureaucratic socialism', a contradiction in terms, but what can more correctly be described as the bureaucratic administration of socialist property forms, with little democratic reference to the working class. Lenin would certainly have continued his fight against bureaucracy, had he lived. In one of his later writings published by *Pravda* on 25 January 1923, 'Better less, but better', he wrote, with reference to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, which at the time was headed by Stalin: '... Let us hope that our new Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate will not suffer from . . . ridiculous primness or ridiculous swank . . . which play entirely into the hands of our Soviet and Party bureaucracy. Let it be said in parenthesis that we have bureaucrats in our party offices as well as in Soviet offices.' After Lenin died, bureaucracy mushroomed and for various reasons, many of this army of bureaucrats threw their support behind Stalin. Thus Stalinism became the bureaucratic administration of socialist property. We would argue that those who do not like the term 'Stalinism' strengthen the view that Stalinism and Leninism are identical, which would mean that Leninism is responsible for the

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present crisis in the Soviet Union. The differences we have with Trotskyism should not prevent Marxist-Leninists from exposing the evils of bureaucracy.

The second weakness in David Kitson's argument concerns the failure of revolution in the developed capitalist states, where he argues that 'this is not only due to the undoubted strength of the state, but also due to the cunning of the capitalist class and its ideological apparatus suborning the workers away from having a proper workers' attitude to life.'

The truth is that at the present time, imperialism still has the resources to sustain a labour aristocracy, feed opportunism and divert the proletarian masses from revolutionary struggle against capitalism – limiting these struggles to reformism. Revolution will come when imperialism is seriously weakened or defeated. TONY CLARK  
Partisan



## Birmingham 6: sixteen-year wait

Persistent reports in the press indicate that the Birmingham 6 are to be freed before Christmas. It is said that the DPP will not contest their appeal, not due to be heard until some time next year. At the same time three detectives have been charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice in the case of the Guildford 4. **MAXINE WILLIAMS** comments.

Since the release of the Guildford 4 pressure has mounted for the Birmingham 6 to be freed. The government has resisted this blow to the credibility of the police and judiciary. It appears that the delay has been caused by a frantic search for a formula which would allow the release of the Six but not further undermine the judicial system. The Six are refusing to accept their freedom unless it is granted by the courts.

According to the press, the formula is likely to be that the forensic evidence against the Six has been shown by modern scientific techniques to be unreliable. The implication is that back in the 70s when the Six were convicted, this could not have been known. Was the fact that the men were beaten black and blue also beyond the scientific and judicial professionals of 1974?

For 16 years these frame ups have haunted the British police, judiciary

and governments. Prominent judges, lawyers, politicians and policemen were involved in the cases. Throughout they have tried to protect themselves and the system which oppresses the Irish people. As pressure mounted they obstructed every stage of the long road to freedom. When the Guildford 4 were released the government's concern was to limit the damage. The May inquiry into the Guildford and Maguire frame-ups looks set to take years. Despite the fact that senior figures, such as Sir Peter Imbert, were intimately involved in the Guildford case, only three policemen are to face prosecution.

That this record of cynical manipulation is now being applied to the method of releasing the Six is entirely in character. The account for the false imprisonment of the Birmingham 6, Guildford 4 and Maguires is sixteen years overdue. Who will ensure it is paid?

## IRA campaign

Since the beginning of the recent campaign by the IRA in Britain the resources of the state's security forces have been seriously stretched. The response has been to step up repressive measures. Such measures in the North have not curbed the IRA's ability to strike at military bases or personnel. **SEAN O'MAOLDHOMNAIGH** reports.

Despite the most advanced surveillance technology available the IRA carried out a shooting attack on two RUC officers patrolling the gates of the cage surrounding Belfast centre. An IRA roadblock was mounted in South Armagh, an area with a massive concentration of British forces. An RUC detective responsible for the torture of nationalists in Castlereagh was apprehended and executed by the IRA. The detective had been a chief prosecution witness in the Christopher Black supergrass trial.

In combined attacks on border posts, the British security network was breached by using collaborators to drive vehicles laden with explosives into the posts. Six soldiers were killed and 17 injured.

In spite of continuing shoot-to-kill operations by British forces, the IRA, in early September, demonstrated their ability to strike back by destroying the local RUC Barracks in Loughgall, scene of the 1987 shoot-to-kill operation in which eight IRA volunteers were killed.

In Britain the campaign continues. In September an army recruitment sergeant in Thatcher's Finchley constituency was killed. On the next day, 18 September, Air Field Marshall Peter Terry was shot and severely injured. Thatcher and Co condemned the shooting of Terry as an attack on a defenceless man. In fact, Terry was governor and military commander of Gibraltar and signed the clearance for the killing of three unarmed IRA members there in 1988. Even closer to the heart of the establishment was the discovery of a bomb left at the site of a conference on terrorism at which Sir Peter Imbert and William Waldegrave were due to speak.

Alarm bells are sounding in the corridors of power. They have increased the number of military police by 600 and commissioned a new force called the Civilian Guard Service to patrol military bases. Top level government talks chaired by Thatcher have discussed further repressive measures including increasing police powers under the PTA, £100,000 rewards for information and a new police squad solely concerned with combatting the IRA.

As staunch a reactionary as Judge Pickles recently admitted that the IRA could not be militarily defeated. It is not a message the government wants to hear.



Loughgall barracks after IRA attack

Thousands marched in Dublin against Dessie Ellis' extradition



## No to extradition

The fight against extradition in Ireland was dealt a serious blow when the Twenty Six County state handed over Republican Dessie Ellis to the British courts on 14 November. **SARAH RICCA** reports on the background.

Dessie Ellis had been on hunger strike fighting his extradition for 36 days. Although he has now ended the strike, the length of his protest is likely to permanently damage his health.

Ellis is being framed. He is wanted on charges of controlling explosives and conspiring to cause explosions in Britain between 1981 and 1983—a period when, as he points out, 'it is a matter of public record that I was in custody or under Special Branch surveillance... so I simply couldn't have done the things they say I did.'

The warrants identify Ellis as 'co-conspirator' with Danny MacNamee, who was framed four years ago for

alleged activities in the same period of 1981–1983, and who is serving 25 years. Ellis now faces the threat of similar treatment.

Dessie Ellis is the first person to be extradited under the 1987 Extradition Act, which effectively removes protection from extradition for political charges—protection which is standard for most western European countries. That is why his courageous protest was so important for the fight against extradition—and his campaign mobilised considerable support north and south. Though he could not force the Southern government to back down, he did expose its

abject subservience to British imperialism. Haughey's only defence of the extradition was to suggest to Ellis's parents that British justice might have improved.

An Irish POW commented that Ellis has been 'judged and condemned by fellow countrymen and women who have done well out of partition... who couldn't conceive of taking a principled stance'. In Britain, support must be mobilised not only to support Dessie when he appears in court, but also to support all those whom the reactionary Twenty Six County state seeks to extradite to British injustice.

## British terror

### SHOOT – TO – KILL

● **Sunday 30 September West Belfast**

Two teenagers were shot dead by members of the British army whilst 'joy-riding' in a stolen car. They were alleged to have failed to stop at a check-point. Eye-witness accounts confirmed that there was no check-point and that the car was fired upon after it had stopped.

● **Tuesday 9 October Co Tyrone**

The British army shot dead two IRA volunteers and arrested eight other people in an attack carried out near farm buildings in Lislay. The press carried unattributed quotes with no evidence linking the two volunteers with a long list of IRA operations. Sinn Fein noted that if both men were sought after and if any evidence existed to link them to anything then it was incomprehensible how both had been living quite openly and within easy reach of the British army and RUC.

● **Monday 12 November Co Tyrone** Alec Patterson, an INLA member, was shot dead in an ambush by undercover troops, probably SAS. The house of a UDR man had apparently been staked out by British forces expecting an attack and Patterson was shot dead.

### LOYALIST DEATH SQUADS

● **Saturday 6 October North Armagh Lurgan**

Dennis Carville, 19, was shot dead by a loyalist gunman. The PAF, cover-name for the UVF, claimed responsibility for his murder.

● **Tuesday 16 October North Belfast** Dermot McGuinness was in his car, which had stopped at a road junction,

when another car pulled alongside and a loyalist gunman got out of the car and shot him dead.

● **Tuesday 23 October Co Tyrone**

Frank Hughes, a taxi driver, went to answer a call for a cab at a hotel. His charred remains were found in the burnt-out taxi the following morning. The UVF claiming responsibility said he was a well known Republican. His family have denied this.

● **Friday 26 October Co Tyrone**

Sinn Fein activist Tommy Casey was shot dead and his wife Kathleen injured. They had driven to a neighbour's house where Tommy told his wife to wait in the car while he went to see if anyone was in. A gunman opened fire on the car. Kathleen was hit on the head and dragged from the car and dumped by her husband's body. The army did not remove Casey's body to the mortuary for five hours. Family members were stopped and questioned when they tried to approach the area. One soldier told Casey's daughter, 'We got him at last'.

### TORTURE

● **Sunday 23 September East Belfast** Castlereagh Interrogation Centre

Twelve men from Co Antrim and Derry were taken to the interrogation centre after raids on their homes. They were held for five days. They were tortured in an attempt to extract signed confessions from them. The methods used against them bear similarities with those used during internment and in Castlereagh in the 1970s: repeated punches and slaps to the head, face, back of the neck and genitals, death threats, suffocation, hooding and sleep deprivation.

Pam Robinson

## PTA arrests in London

At least ten Irish people were arrested under the PTA over the weekend of 10/11 November in Kilburn and North London. A week later on Saturday 17 November, three were charged with conspiracy to cause explosions and others are still being detained.

Two of the women arrested in Kilburn were released on Tuesday 13 November and related how they had been outside a dance hall when 30 police appeared and put them and three friends against a wall. One was told her children would be taken into care and they were interrogated about IRA membership. Later a man was arrested at the house of the former husband—an activist on Ireland and member of the Workers Revolutionary Party—of one of the arrested women.

A massive police operation was also staged in Donnington and Chamberlayne Roads in Willesden Green. Two thousand people were ordered to leave their homes within five minutes and were not allowed to return for 10 hours. The police claim to have found explosives and weapons in two nearby cars.

Having had little success in combating the IRA's campaign in Britain, the police are presenting these latest events as a breakthrough. But the truth is that, as usual, the police are using the PTA to try and intimidate the Irish community.

Maxine Williams